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# FOSTER'S SKAT MANUAL

BY

R. F. FOSTER

Author of

"Foster's Pirate Bridge," "Foster on Auction," "Foster's  
Russian Bank," "Auction Made Easy," etc.



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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

AMONG those who play cards for the intellectual amusement they afford, rather than as an excuse for gambling, Skat still holds its position as the best of all card games. It has all the strong points of bridge in giving full scope for the display of skill and judgment, both in bidding and play, with the additional advantage that the player who is chiefly responsible for the result is not at the mercy of any partner, which is, and has always been, the one fatal defect of bridge.

The one objection usually made to Skat, is the supposed difficulty of learning the game, it having, unfortunately, started with the reputation of being complicated. At the time this charge was made, the comparison was with whist, then the public favorite, and the easiest game in the world to learn. "Follow suit or trump." That is all there was to learn about playing whist.

The objections to the complications of Skat have been largely removed by the introduction of what are technically called "Gucki Solos," the highest bidder taking the Skat cards into his hand before naming his game. This cuts out a great many of the uncertainties of the bidding and complications in the scoring, and removes one of the chief difficulties of learning the game as first played in this country, fifteen or twenty years ago. As now generally played, there is no uncertainty as to what cards are in the skat, or out against the highest bidder. The game has now all the fascinations and possibilities of Auction Bridge, with none of

its drawbacks. At no distant day, Skat may be the national game.

The game described in the following pages is the official game, as regulated by the laws of the American Skat League, but the remarks made in connection with Solos, page 84, 93 and 161, will explain the difference between the official game, as still played in the annual tournaments of the American Skat League, and the popular game of the clubs.

R. F. FOSTER.

532 MONROE STREET,  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

January, 1922.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE following pages are an attempt to present the elements of the modern game of Skat in such a manner that the reader may understand it, and the student may sit down and play it.

Many persons have played Skat for a number of years without understanding it as they should, and the few who have read any text-books on the subject seem to have learnt little or nothing from them. While the authors of these books may have been masters of the game they wrote about, they do not seem to have possessed the ability to communicate their knowledge to others. The matter contained in these text-books is presented to the mind in such a manner as to confuse, rather than assist, and the usual result of their perusal is to discourage and dismay.

The complications and difficulties of which one hears so much exist only in the imagination of those who have not studied the subject. If the game is properly presented to the pupil, it is easily mastered, and I have found that in ten lessons of one hour each I can make any person of ordinary intelligence a better Skat-player than the majority of those who have simply picked up the game, although they may have played it for years.

The results of this experience in teaching are given in the chapters that follow.

I wish to express my indebtedness to Herr K. Buhle of Leipzig (whose works on the game in German I have always recommended as classics in their way), for many of the illustrative hands and principles which are used in the present work.

R. F. FOSTER.

532 MONROE STREET,  
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## INTRODUCTION

SKAT is unquestionably one of the most fascinating of all card games, not only on account of its infinite variety, but because of its elasticity and its adaptability to persons of varying ability.

It has several points in its favour which no other game can boast of. To begin with, it is one of the few good games for three players; but if there are four or five candidates they can all play, and even six may make up the table. This is infinitely better than whist and bridge, in which, if there are not exactly four, it is either impossible to play, or some one must sit out and watch the game all through a rubber. In Skat, the game is finished any time you wish to stop, and it is not necessary to forego the pleasure of another rubber for fear it would last so long that you would miss your train or your dinner.

Skat does not require the gambling element to make it interesting, like bridge or poker. In bridge you must play for something, or there would be no restraint on the declarations. No matter how rash the declaration may be in bridge, it is possible to pull it off; but in Skat it is useless to overbid your hand, because you know in advance that you must lose. In bridge, you

declare with a view to winning as much money as possible; in Skat, you declare in order to get the privilege of playing. In the one you *must* declare, win or lose; in the other you declare only when you have the odds in your favour.

Many of the elements which make bridge so popular are to be found in Skat; such as the sole responsibility for the result resting with the player who names the trump, and the combination of two adversaries against him. But in Skat there is the added interest that the adversaries are not always the same pair, as they are in bridge. With a table of four players, there are no less than nine different ways in which one player, naming the trump, may be opposed to a different partnership.

'In bridge, there are only two games: trumps and no-trumps, and there is only one way of selecting them—to name them. In Skat there are seven games, and there are three different ways of selecting them. When you have a particularly worthless hand at bridge, you must lose; but at Skat you can win points with the worst possible hand that can be dealt. In bridge, you have a certainty in the honour scores, which are a mere matter of luck, while in Skat you must play for everything you get, and the most overwhelming hand may be defeated.

In Skat, there is just enough of the element of luck to make the game interesting to the novice and to in-

sure a chance for the beginner. The game is full of the most delightful surprises, which are a refreshing change from the deadly monotony of the invincible hand which one continually sees at the bridge table. The difference between the expression on the faces of a party of Skat-players and that on those at a bridge table is alone sufficient to convince any unprejudiced spectator that bridge is getting on the nerves of its devotees, while the Skat-players are thoroughly enjoying themselves. It is a jolly game, with lots of life and excitement in it, and no one who has ever played it long enough to understand it thoroughly was ever known to give it up for any other game.

Popular error supposes that Skat is a peculiarly German game, which is quite unsuited to other nationalities. If you mention Skat to any one who is not familiar with the game, you will probably be favoured with the opinion that it is a very complicated affair. If you suggest to a German who has played Skat for a number of years, that it would be a good game for English or Americans, he will shake his head and tell you that it is too deep for them. He evidently wishes you to infer that it requires a German intellect to master it. If you reply that the English and Americans seem to have possessed intelligence enough to master whist, he will smile at you and remark that whist is child's play, compared to Skat.

It is a peculiarity of the German mind continually

to mistake the complex for the profound. It is inconceivable to the German that whist can be such a difficult game as we know it to be, because its elements are so simple. Because the elements of Skat are more complicated, it is assumed to be a deeper game; but such is not the case, the fact being that there never was, and probably never will be, such a profound game of cards as whist.

This continual repetition of the statement that Skat is a very complicated or a very difficult game has gradually come to pass for fact. When one makes the attempt to learn the game, one's experience seems to confirm its reputation, but this is simply because the game is thrown at one all at once. The general idea of teaching a person Skat is to make him play, the one who has no cards in each deal sitting behind the beginner and giving him ten different pieces of advice about ten different things in one hand, and then ten ifs and buts in the next hand. It is worse than having all the declarations and honour valuations and leads hurled at you the first time you sit down to the bridge table.

I learned Skat that way, and after playing it for ten years I had no clear idea of any part of the game, and no grasp of its fundamental principles, except the method of bidding and the point value of won or lost games. To tell a solo from a grand was guesswork, not based on any comprehensive rule which would

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stand analysis or criticism. Since I have taught myself the game scientifically, taking the game apart and analyzing it, and am better able to judge the ability of others, I must say that I have not seen more than two or three really first-class players, although I have met hundreds who thought they were. So far from the majority of those who play Skat thoroughly understanding the game, they know as little about its fine points as the average domestic rubber knows about bridge.

As to the ability of English or Americans to master Skat, which Germans seem so doubtful of, I am confident that within the next few years the English-speaking people will be the best Skat-players in the world; all they need is to be properly taught. It is a peculiarity of the Americans to take hold of any game, indoor or out, and to carry it to a perfection which its originators never dreamed of. They will do the same thing with the game of Skat.





# FOSTER'S SKAT MANUAL



## HISTORICAL

SKAT is distinguished from many other national games by the fact that it is of comparatively modern origin, and was first played in a place that can be pointed out with certainty. This enables us to trace its history with tolerable accuracy.

For the facts connected with the development of Skat, we are indebted to the members of a card club that used to meet at Altenburg, under the name of the Brommesche Tarokgesellschaft. Although this was nominally a tarok club, its members were apparently familiar with all the games played at that time, especially solo and ombre.

The elements of Skat appear to have been derived from the Wendish game of Schafkopf, or Schafskopf, which we are told was a favourite with the farmers of Thuringen, a province of Saxony, lying southwest of Berlin.

As the story goes, the game of Schafkopf first came to the notice of polite society in 1811. An enthusiastic card-player who resided in Altenburg, and who was a member of the Tarok Club, had occasion to send his coachman to a small town in the Sachsische Erzgebirges. During the trip, this coachman passed his

evenings learning the Wendish game from some of the peasants along the road. Knowing his master's predilection for card games, the coachman explained Schafkopf to him on his return, and the master thought well enough of it to induce some of his friends to give it a trial. One of those who took kindly to the new game was the Advocate Hempel, a cousin of the Professor Hempel who wrote the first text-book on Skat, thirty years later.

The games already familiar to the members of the Tarok Club undoubtedly had an influence in shaping the career of the newcomer, tarok itself probably more than any other. This is an Italian game, and is known to be one of the most ancient games of cards, probably imported into Germany as early as the 16th century. Many of the ideas and terms in Skat are clearly derived from the more ancient tarok, the variations in the play being probably suggested from time to time by members of the club who appreciated the fine points of the older game and wished to preserve or perpetuate some of its interesting features.

As first played in Altenburg immediately after 1811, no cards were laid out for the skat during the deal. The dealer took twelve cards, turning up the last one for the trump, the other players having ten cards each. The dealer was obliged to play against the two others, after he had laid out two cards, so as to reduce his hand to ten. The points in these skat cards counted

for the dealer at the end. Gradually it seems to have become the fashion to allow the other players to name the trump, instead of turning it up. This was practically an offer to play solo in a named suit, but the suits did not outrank one another as they do now, and the player simply won his game if he got sixty-one points home.

This method of allowing others to name the trump compelled the dealer to take only ten cards, and the two surplus cards left on the table were taken by the bidder and others laid out, the points in them to be counted for the single player at the end of the hand. It is in this form of the game that we see the introduction of the Italian idea in tarok and calabrasella. In tarok, two cards were laid away, which were called "skat" cards; in calabrasella, a game which is still widely played and requires no little skill, we have the same offer to play single-handed against two adversaries, with the privilege of taking unknown cards lying on the table and discarding others in their place.

At this stage of development, it was necessary to have a name for the cards left on the table during the deal, and nothing could be more natural than to adopt the one that the members of the club were already familiar with in the game of tarok, "skat."

This word, it may be observed, is evidently derived from the Italian "scartare," to discard, and its derivative, "scatola," a box, or place of safe-keeping. In

some German works the word is still spelled "scat." In later years we find those who made still further changes in the game going again to the Italian tarok for the term "matadore."

The system of allowing players other than the dealer to name the trump could not last long without giving rise to disputes as to which should have the privilege, and in order to meet this difficulty the varying values of the suits were introduced. About this time, 1818, a brief article appeared in the *Osterländer Blättern*, describing the new game under the name of "Skat," and commenting upon its wonderful increase in popularity during the short time of its existence.

For a number of years Skat-players seem to have been content with the game in the form in which it was described in this article, until a certain Rathkopisten N., who would not allow his name to be published, proposed the introduction of the matadores, and also suggested that solo should be played without touching the skat cards. This brought the game to two forms, simple and solo, tournee being still unheard of. Until this proposal to play without the skat cards, the game had always been what we know as frage, which is no longer played, so that we have practically nothing left of the original Schafkopf.

Soon after the introduction of the matadores and solos, we find the game beginning to spread from Altenburg, and in 1826 the new variations had arrived

at the University in Leipzig, and from thence they spread to other institutions of learning, from which the students carried the game home to all parts of Germany

It was not until 1848 that any attempt was made to state the principles of Skat in a text-book. In that year, Gymnasium Professor J F L Hempel of Altenburg published the rules of the game under the title, "Das Skatspiel, von J F L H". Soon after Hempel's book, we find a work of 48 pages published in Leipzig by C W B Namburg, dated 1855, and another of 30 pages by G von F Quedlingburg at Leipzig in 1856.

It is in these works that we find the first mention of playing grand and nullo. As then played, the grand was a true no trumper, there being no matadores in it as now. We have no record of the exact date at which the matadores were introduced to grand.

The tournee was not played until the sixties, and after that came the ramsch. In quite recent years other forms of the game have been introduced to meet the demands of altered conditions, and to allow greater freedom in the bidding. The most notable and also the most popular of these are the gucki and passt mir-nicht. Although the governing bodies of both the German and North-American Skat Leagues have refused to recognise these two games, they have undoubtedly come to stay, especially the gucki grand. It is not

unlikely that the gucki nullo will be equally well received when it is better known.

It is not improbable that further changes will be introduced, especially in the matter of eliminating the one great vice of the game, which is reckoning the value of the matadores found in the skat when any player bids solo. In any game played without the skat cards, those cards should be absolutely disregarded and remain untouched. If the adversaries get 60, they win; if they get 90, they make the player schneider; if they do not reach 30, they are schneider themselves. There is no necessity for the player to count his skat, and the wenzels show for themselves in the play.

With regard to the laws of the game, which alone can remedy this one great defect in Skat, the first attempt to set them in order was made by a congress of Skat-players convened in Altenburg on Saturday, the 7th of August, 1886. More than a thousand delegates were present from all parts of Germany, and many came from Austria and America. The following years congresses were held in Leipzig and Dresden, and in 1888 the laws were published in book form by Theodor Thomas of Leipzig.

Since then, annual congresses have been held in various cities of Germany, and the Deutschen Skat Verbands publish a monthly paper, entitled *Die Deutsche Skat-Zeitung*, the subscription to which is seventy-five cents, or three marks, or three shillings, a year, in-



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cluding membership in the League, if sent to Robert Fuchs, Altenburg, Germany.

In America, the first Skat Congress was held at St. Louis, Mo., on Saturday, the 22d of January, 1898, and congresses have been held annually ever since. At this time, the American Skat League has, unfortunately, no official organ and no permanent address to which applications for membership can be sent. If the game continues to grow in popularity at its present rate, this state of affairs will soon be remedied.

## THE AMERICAN LAWS OF SKAT

1. The following are the unit values of the various games:

<i>Trumps; ♦ ♥ ♠ ♣</i>	<i>Jacks Trumps;—</i>	<i>No Trumps;—</i>
Simple . 1 2 3 4	Tournee Grand 12	Tournee Nullo 10
Tournee 5 6 7 8	Solo Grand . . . 16	Solo Nullo . . . 20
Solo . . . 9 10 11 12	Open Grand . . 24	Open Nullo . . 40

2. When there are trumps, the unit value of the game shall be multiplied as follows: 1 for game; 2 for schneider; 3 for announcing schneider, or for making schwarz without having made any announcement; 4 for schwarz after announcing schneider; and 5 for announcing schwarz. To each of these multipliers shall be added one for each matadore, with or without.

3. When there are no trumps there shall be no multipliers.

4. The value of Ramsch shall be 20 points, to be charged to the player losing the game. If one player take no trick, the loser shall be charged 30 points. If two players take no trick, the loser shall be charged 50 points. In case of ties, the winner of the last trick shall be the loser.

5. In all games which are played "open," the hand

of the player must be laid face up on the table before either adversary plays a card; but the adversaries shall not be allowed to consult, neither can they dictate to the player what cards he shall play.

### Formation of Table

6. Any number from three to six may form a table, but there shall be only three active players in each deal, and they shall be known respectively as Vorhand, Mittelhand, and Hinterhand. Those who hold no cards shall share the fortunes of those opposed to the single player whose score is put down.

7. There shall be as many deals in each round as there are players at the table, and no person shall be allowed to withdraw from the game during a round, unless the others consent to a substitute and such substitute be found.

8. Newcomers can enter only after the conclusion of a round, and with the consent of the other players. The new candidate for play must take his seat so that he shall have the deal.

9. If seats are drawn for, the lowest skat card shall have the first choice. The next lowest shall sit on his left, and so on. In cutting, the cards and suits rank as in play. The one drawing the lowest card shall deal the first hand, and the score shall be kept by the player on his right.

10. The game shall come to an end only at the conclusion of a round.

## Cards

11. There are thirty-two cards in the pack, the rank and value of which are as follows: Jack 2; ace 11; ten 10; king 4; queen 3; the nine, eight, and seven having no value.

12. The suits always outrank one another in the same order in bidding for the trump: Clubs, Spades, Hearts, and Diamonds. The four Jacks, which are always the four best trumps, outrank one another in the same way.

13. In Nullo, the cards rank: A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7, and the suits and jacks are all of equal rank.

## Dealing

14. When four or more play at the same table, the dealer takes no cards, but gives cards to the two sitting immediately on his left and to the one next him on his right.

15. When only three play, Hinterhand deals the cards.

16. The deal passes in order to the left.

17. After being thoroughly shuffled, the pack must be presented to the pone, the player sitting on the dealer's right, to be cut, and at least three cards must be

left in each packet. Any player may demand a right to shuffle the cards before they are dealt, but the dealer shall have the last shuffle, before presenting the cards to be cut. If any card is exposed in cutting there must be a new cut.

18. The dealer shall give each active player cards, three at a time for the first round, face down, beginning on his left. He shall then lay aside two cards, face down, for the skat. Each player shall then receive four cards at a time for the second round, and finally three cards at a time for the last round.

19. If any card is found faced in the pack, or if the pack be proved incorrect or imperfect, there must be a new deal.

20. Should a player deal out of his proper turn, the deal must stand if a bid has been made or a game announced, otherwise there must be a new deal by the right dealer. When the deal stands, the next deal must be made by the player who should have dealt, and subsequent deals must be so arranged that there shall be the right number to each round. The player dealing out of turn shall be penalised 10 points.

### Errors in Dealing

21. There are no misdeals. No matter what happens, the same dealer must deal again if it was his proper turn to deal.

22. If a card is exposed during the deal, there must be a new deal, or if the cards of the players become confused so that the dealer cannot separate them.

23. If the dealer gives too many or too few cards to any player, or neglects to lay out the skat cards in their proper turn, or does not give the right number of cards in each round, or gives three to one player and four to another, or fails to present the pack to be cut, there must be a new deal.

### The Skat Cards

24. Any active player taking up or seeing either or both of the skat cards, when he is not entitled to do so, shall be debarred from bidding that deal. If any but an active player look at either of the skat cards, 10 points shall be deducted from his score.

25. If any Kiebitz (an onlooker not belonging to the table) looks at either of the skat cards, he may be called upon to pay the value of the game.

26. If an active player look at the skat cards during the play, he not having laid out those cards himself from his hand, he shall be charged with the full value of the game, but the hand shall be played out, in order to settle the score of the other players.

27. Should any active player take one or both the skat cards into his hand by mistake, before the bidding begins, the dealer shall draw from his hand, face down, enough cards to reduce his hand to ten and the

player at fault shall be charged 25 points penalty, and be debarred from bidding for that deal.

28. Should the successful bidder take both the skat cards into his hand together, or pick them up together, he shall be obliged to play a Gucki Grand, unless he shall have first announced that he played Nullo. Should he put one of the skat cards in his hand without first showing it, he shall be obliged to play a Passt-Mir-Nicht, and turn up the other card.

29. The player may turn up either of the skat cards, but should he expose both in so doing he must play the suit of the higher value.

30. Should he turn up a jack, he may either play in suit or he may announce a grand.

31. A player turning up a seven cannot announce nullo unless it has been previously agreed to play Tournee Nullos.

32. The player who takes the skat cards must lay out two cards in their place before a card is led. Should he neglect to lay out for the skat, or should he lay out more or less than two, and not discover the error until the first trick has been turned and quitted, he shall lose his game.

### Bidding

33. All bidding shall be by numbers representing the value of some possible game, and the lowest bid allowed shall be 10.

34. Mittelhand must bid to Vorhand, and Vorhand must either undertake as good a game as that offered him, or pass. If Vorhand passes, Hinterhand bids to Mittelhand, and Mittelhand must either undertake as good a game as that offered, or pass. If Mittelhand passes when bidding to Vorhand, Hinterhand must bid to Vorhand; but Hinterhand is not allowed to say anything until the bidding between Vorhand and Mittelhand is settled.

35. Any figure once named cannot be recalled.

36. The survivor of the bidding shall be known as the Player, and shall have the privilege of naming the game to be played; the two other active players being his adversaries.

37. If no bid is made, and Vorhand will not undertake to play any game against the two others, Ramsch must be played.

### Announcements

38. The player who does not use the skat cards shall announce the suit which he selects for the trump, or shall state that he plays Grand or Nullo, as the case may be.

39. If he wishes to announce schneider or schwarz, he must do so at the time that he names the game he will play.

40. The manner of taking up the skat cards is suf-



ficient announcement for a Tournee, Passt-Mir-Nicht, or Gucki Grand.

41. The player is not allowed to announce either schneider or schwarz in any game in which the skat cards are used.

42. The adversaries cannot announce schneider or schwarz under any circumstances.

43. No player but Vorhand can announce Ramsch, and then only when no bid has been made.

### Playing

44. In Tournee, but not in Solo, Grand, or Nullo, the player may, in order to save a possible schneider, abandon his game as lost, before a card is played. He should do so before laying out for the skat, and the adversaries shall be bound to score it simply as a game lost, even if they could have made the player schneider.

45. No matter who is the player, Vorhand must lead for the first trick. The winner of the trick leads for the next trick, and so on, and each player in turn must follow suit if he can.

46. If, during the play of the hand, any player is found to have a wrong number of cards, the others having their right number, only those who have their right number can win the game. If it is the player who has a wrong number, his game is lost. If it is one of his adversaries, the player wins.

47. If the player leads out of turn, the cards must be taken back if the trick is not complete, but if both adversaries have played to the false lead, the trick stands.

48. If an adversary of the player leads out of turn, and the player call attention to it, he may immediately claim his game as won, and abandon his cards; or he may insist that the play proceed, with a view to making the adversaries schneider or schwarz. Whether he proceeds or not, his game is won.

49. If during the progress of the hand the player lays his cards upon the table, face up, and announces that he has won his game by reaching 61 or 91, whichever may be necessary to make good his bid, and it is proved that he is mistaken, he loses his game, even if he could have taken up his cards again and won it.

50. If an adversary lays his cards face up on the table and claims to have already defeated the player's game, all that adversary's cards shall be taken in by the player, and counted with his own. If the adversary be found to be in error, he shall be charged individually with the full value of the game, in addition to which the player shall score the value of it as won.

51. If the player declares his game lost, and places his cards upon the table, the adversaries shall take all such cards and add them to their own, without further playing.

## The Revoke

52. Should the player revoke, and not discover the error before the trick is turned and quitted, he loses his game. If he discovers and corrects the error in time, there is no penalty, but the adversary who plays after him may amend his play.

53. If the adversary of the player revokes and discovers the error in time to correct it, that is, before the trick is turned and quitted, the player may call upon him to play his highest or lowest card of the suit in which he renounces. If the revoke is not corrected in time, the adversaries lose the game.

54. An adversary may ask his partner if he has none of the suit to which he renounces. If the partner revokes in spite of being asked, and the trick is turned, the individual in error shall pay his partner's losses on the game. That is, the loss of the individual partner who asks him.

## Looking Back

55. Any active player may see the last trick turned and quitted, but no more. Should he look at any other trick, or count his cards, he immediately loses his game; but either of the other players may insist on finishing the hand for the purpose of settling the value of the game.

## Scoring

56. The player wins his game if he reaches 61 points. He wins schneider if he reaches 91. He wins schwarz if he gets every trick.

57. If the adversaries reach 30, they are out of schneider. If they reach 60, they defeat the player. If they reach 90 they make him schneider; and if they win every trick they make him schwarz.

58. The value of the game having been calculated according to Law No. 2, the amount won or lost shall be entered under the name of the individual player, and each following item shall be added to or deducted from the previous total, so that the last entry shall at all times show the exact state of the player's score.

59. At the end of the sitting, each player wins from or loses to each of the others at the table the full amount of his score.

60. In every case in which a player loses his game he loses what he would have won if he had been successful, regardless of the amount he may have bid.

61. If the player fails to win a game equal to the amount he has bid, he loses the value of the next higher game which would have made his bid good; because in no case can a player lose less than he bid, and in every case must he lose some multiple of the game which he declared to play.

### Variations in Scoring

In some places the system of bidding by numbers in such a manner as to make them fit the old methods of bidding by suits, is still adhered to. This compels them to make a Nullo worth 23, so that it may still come between the lowest spade and club solos, and to play Ramsch at 10, so that it shall equal the lowest Tournee bid.

In many places they still play Grand Solo worth 18, but the Open Grand at 24 only.

In many parts of Germany it is still the rule to use the same unit value for Solo that is used for Tournee, but to add one multiplier for the Solo. They count it in this manner when it is a club solo: One for game, one for "out of hand," with two, four times eight, thirty-two. We should count it worth thirty-six.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME

FOR the benefit of those who prefer to have a general idea of what a game is like, before they sit down to the study of its details, the following brief description may be useful.

Skat is played with a pack of thirty-two cards, all below the seven being deleted. As in all German games, the 10 ranks next to the A, and then come the K, Q, 9, 8, 7. The four J's are always the best cards in the pack, no matter what the trump suit may be.

There are never more than three active players in each deal, although four or five may sit at the same table and take their turns to become active players. Each individual is for himself, and the final result is an individual score. The game is at an end any time the players wish to stop, each deal being practically a complete game in itself.

Any one can have the first deal, after which it passes in order to the left. The cards are given out three at a time for the first round; then two are laid aside, face down, for the skat; then four more to each player, and finally three, so that each hand consists of ten cards.

There are several varieties of games to be played, and

the players bid against one another for the privilege of saying what the game shall be, the one offering to play the game which will win or lose the greatest number of points having the choice. This bidding is done by naming the figure value of a game, such as ten, twelve, or twenty. These amounts are offered to the player who has the right to name the game if no one else bids for it; that is the one sitting on the dealer's left. If the one to whom the offer is made has as good a game himself, he says so, and the other must bid higher or pass. If the holder has not as good a game, he passes, and the next player must bid to the one who now holds the privilege.

The successful bidder, who is called the "player," can play as much more expensive a game as he pleases, but he cannot play a cheaper one. Having stated what he is going to play, the two others become partners against him for that deal, but there is no change in the position of the first lead, which is always with the player on the dealer's left. Players must follow suit if they can, and the winner of a trick leads for the next, as in any game of cards.

There are three kinds of game to be played and three ways of playing them. The successful bidder can play with a whole suit for trumps as well as the four jacks; or with only the jacks as trumps; or without any trumps at all. He can also determine what the trump shall be in three different ways: by taking both the

skat cards into his own hand; by turning up one of them; or by leaving them both alone and declaring on his own cards.

If he names a suit for trumps, it is to his advantage to pick out one which will gain for him the most points, if he has a choice; because the suits vary in value, clubs being the best, spades next, then hearts, and finally diamonds.

As the four jacks are always the best trumps, there are eleven cards in the trump suit and only seven in each of the plain suits. The jacks outrank one another just as the suits do, the club jack being the best, then spades, hearts, and diamonds. When jacks are the only trumps, the plain suits are all equal, so that there are four plain suits of seven cards each and a four-card trump suit, all jacks; but the jacks still retain their rank with regard to one another.

When there is no trump at all, the cards rank as at whist, A, K, Q, J, 10, 9, 8, 7.

When there is a trump, the player's object is always to win. When there is no trump, his object is to lose.

The object of the game, when there is a trump, is not to win so many tricks, but to get home a certain number of points in the tricks won. These points are reckoned by giving the five highest cards in each suit a fixed value. The A counts 11; the 10, 10; the K, 4; the Q, 3; the J, 2. There being four suits with 30



points in each, there are 120 in the pack, and the successful bidder must get home the majority of this 120; that is, 61 or more, or he loses his game.

In playing without any trump, the cards have no value, because the moment the player takes a single trick, his game is lost.

The amount won by the player when he wins his game by getting 61 or more points in his cards, depends on two things: the suit and manner of its selection, and the number of trumps he holds or does not hold, in unbroken sequence with the club jack. To the number of this sequence is always added 1 for winning the game. These two factors, the value of a trump selected in a certain way, and the sequence of trumps, are multiplied together, and the result is the number of points won or lost.

To illustrate: Let us suppose that the trump selected was a club, which the player named without touching the skat cards. The unit value of this game is 12. Let us suppose further that the player held the jacks of clubs and spades, but that his opponents had the jack of hearts. Then his sequence of "matadores," as they are called, stopped at 2, to which he adds 1 for winning his game. The unit value of the club solo, 12, is therefore to be multiplied by 3, and the player wins  $3 \times 12 = 36$  points. This is supposing that he got home 61 in his cards. Had he got home 91 or more, he would have added another multiplier, mak-

ing his game worth  $4 \times 12 = 48$ . Had he seen from the strength of his hand before he began to play that he must get home 91 or more, he could have announced "schneider," as it is called, in advance, and that announcement would have given him still another multiplier, making his game worth  $5 \times 12 = 60$ .

Knowing that he was going to play a club solo if he was the successful bidder, and knowing that he held two matadores, it is obvious that he knew in advance that his game would be worth at least 36 points if he won it; therefore he was able to bid anything up to that figure for the privilege of naming the game to be played. Had any other player offered more than 36, the one with the club solo would have had to stop, because if one overbids his hand he loses what he would have been obliged to get home to make his bid good. Had he risked a bid of 40, for instance, he would have been compelled to make his adversaries schneider to get another multiplier, or he would lose 48.

When the player wins, he wins from both his adversaries. If there is a fourth who takes no cards, the player wins from him also. If the player loses, he loses to all the others at the table.

This description is quite sufficient to give one a general idea of the game, the details of which will be presented in proper sequence in the following pages.

## HOW TO LEARN SKAT

WHILE no book can ever take the place of a personal teacher, simply because the book has not intelligence enough to adapt itself to the varying abilities of its readers, and cannot stop to make still more clear to one person that which is almost too clear to another, yet much can be learned from a book if the student will conscientiously follow the directions which are given for its perusal, instead of skipping through is as if it were a novel.

It is imperative that any person who is really desirous of learning a game from a book should lay out the actual cards, and study the principles of play with the cards before him. Many persons imagine that it is an easy matter to remember rules provided that they understand them clearly when they read them, but I can assure them that nothing is more difficult. You understood perfectly what was said to you at dinner last week; you do not remember a word of it now. It is precisely the same with rules or principles of play; they must be impressed on the memory by experience, whether that experience is gained by laying out cards at home or taking part in an actual game at a club.

Do not try to remember rules, but train the eye

by practice with the actual cards, so that you will recognise the situation the moment you see it again. Those who will take the trouble to sort out the cards for the Illustrative Hands and play them over, will find themselves tenfold repaid.

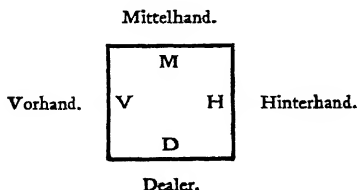
## FIRST PRINCIPLES

ONE of the chief attractions of Skat is its elasticity. Any number from three to six can take part in the game at the same table, but when there are more than five, it is better to make up two separate tables. The best number to form a table is four.

No matter what the number at the table, there are never more or less than three active players. When there are four, the dealer in each round takes no cards himself. When there are more than four, the dealer gives cards to the two players immediately on his left and the one on his right.

### The Players

The German names are usually adopted to signify the positions of the players who take an active part. This would be the arrangement of four players at a table:



In diagrams, the letters are enough to indicate the players. Vorhand, or V, corresponds to our eldest hand or leader. Next on his left comes the Mittelhand, M, and Hinterhand is the last player on the first trick. Throughout this work the players will be indicated simply by the initial letters: V, M, H. It is never necessary to refer to the Dealer, because when only three persons form a table H deals the cards, so that V shall be the leader to the first trick.

No matter how many are at the same table, the deal passes to the left in regular order, so that if there are four, the one who dealt the last hand will be H, and the one who was V will be the dealer, taking no cards.

In Skat, two players combine against the single player, the single player being the one who decides what shall be the trump. This individual, who is always referred to as the "player," to distinguish him from the "partners" or "adversaries," may be either V, M, or H; but his position does not affect the lead, which is always with V, no matter where the "player" sits.

## The Cards

There are thirty-two cards in the pack, all below the seven being thrown out. This gives us four suits of eight cards each.

There are three kinds of games. With a whole suit for trumps; with nothing but the four jacks for trumps; and, with no trumps at all. This last being a graft upon the game, and having nothing in common with it, we shall dismiss it entirely from our consideration until we come to it in its proper place in the chapter on Nullo, at the end. In what follows we shall make matters much clearer if we treat the subject as if there were no such thing in Skat as a no-trumper, or nullo.

Whether the trumps are a whole suit of cards or only the four jacks, the jacks are always the best trumps, and they always maintain a certain order of rank with regard to one another. As this order is the key to the whole game, it should be mastered as early as possible, and the best way for the beginner is to have continually before him upon the table a card with the four jacks pasted on it in this order:



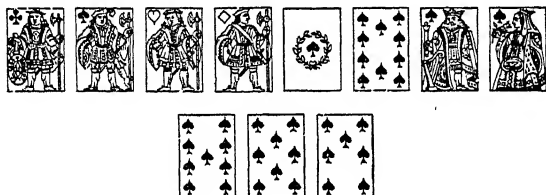
If they are made to overlap, so as to give special prominence to the club jack, it will impress the order better on the memory. The club is always the best; then comes the spade; then the heart, and then the diamond.

Another stumbling block for the beginner is the pe-


culiar rank of the cards. As in all German games, the 10 comes next to the A, and will win the K; so that whether the suit is a trump suit or not, the trick-taking rank of the cards will always be as follows:




If a suit is named for the trump, there will be eleven trumps in play, and their rank will be as follows:





The five highest cards in each suit have a numerical value attached to them with which the beginner should make himself thoroughly familiar. These values are as follows:


Any  is worth 11 points.

Any  is worth 10 points.



Any  is worth 4 points.

Any  is worth 3 points.

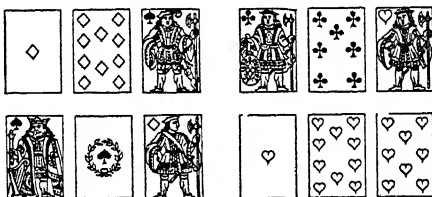
Any  is worth 2 points.

The 7, 8, and 9 have no value.

As there are 30 points in each of the 4 suits, there are 120 points in the pack, and the object of the player is to secure the majority of these 120 points; that is, 61 or more. The number of tricks taken in does not make the slightest difference, because the player who takes in 61 in two tricks is just as much a winner as if he got home 61 points in eight tricks.

As this numerical value of the cards taken in in tricks decides the game, it is very important that the player should early accustom himself to the process of mental addition which enables him to keep count of the total number of points which he has taken home. The shortest and surest way to acquire this facility is not to wait until you are engaged in actual play, but to take a pack of cards, shuffle them, and give yourself about half of them. Run these over and ascertain their total pip value. Let us sup-

pose that you happen to pick out some such as the following:



The easiest way to count these is to take them three at a time, as that is the way in which they will present themselves in play. This would give you:  $23 + 4 = 27 + 17 = 44 + 21 = 65$ . At first, the beginner may find it easier to add the cards one at a time before gathering them. If his total is 27 he can say, "and 4 is 31 and 11 is 42 and 2 is 44." With practice this mental count can be kept without taking the attention from the run of the cards.

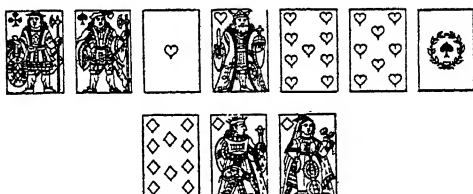
## The Matadores

Having mastered the rank and value of the cards, the next thing is to count the unbroken sequences of trumps, beginning with the club jack. The number in this sequence is called the number of matadores.

The club jack is always a matadore, so there must always be 1, and there may be 11. If the club jack is in the hand of the player, all other trumps in se-

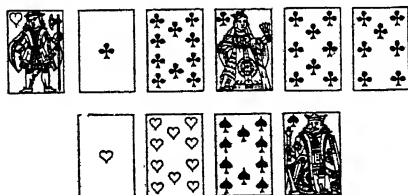
quence with it in his hand or skat are matadores, and he is said to be "with" so many. If the club jack is not in the hand or skat of the player, he must be "without" so many, because if he has not the club jack he has no matadores. If his opponents have it, they count all the trumps in sequence with it, whether in one hand or divided between them, and where their sequence stops, his must begin. If they are "with" three, he must be "without" three.

Let us suppose that hearts are trumps, and that the player holds these cards:



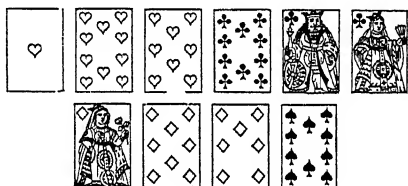
His sequence of matadores stops at the spade jack, so he is "with" 2.

Suppose clubs are trumps, and the following cards in the hand of the player:



Not having the club jack, he must be "without," and as the spade jack is also missing, he is "without" 2.

In order to become familiar with this sequence of matadores it is excellent practice to take any ten cards from the pack of thirty-two, and to count the matadores in each of the suits that the hand happens to contain. Let us suppose some such cards as these to be selected:



Not having the club jack, the player must be "without" 4 in hearts; "without" 5 in clubs and spades; "without" 7 in diamonds. The greatest number to be "with" or "without" is 11, and that must include the skat cards if it is "with." In Illustrative Hand No. 6 the reader will find an example of a player being "without" 10, and still winning his game.

### Choice of Seats and Deal

The players' positions at the table are not considered of any importance unless one is superstitious, but they may be drawn for. The person drawing the lowest skat card, the suits outranking one another as in play,

has the choice of seats, the next lower card sitting on his left and so on. Any other method of drawing lots may be adopted if agreeable to all.

Any one may deal the first hand, but when seats are drawn for it is usual for the one cutting the lowest card to deal first and for the player on his right to keep the score. If a certain player is selected as score-keeper on account of his greater reliability, or for any other reason, the player on his left must deal the first hand, so that the score-keeper shall know that when it comes to his own deal, it is the end of a round. Beginners should take every opportunity to keep the score, in order to become familiar with the values of the various games won and lost.

## Dealing

The cards being thoroughly shuffled and presented to the right hand to be cut, at least three cards must be left in each packet. The top cut should be placed nearer the dealer, who must reunite the packets before beginning to deal.

The modern rule for dealing is to give three cards to each player in turn, beginning on the dealer's left, and then to lay out two cards, face down, for the skat. Then four more to each player in turn, and finally three. This rule is briefly expressed by the formula: three, skat, four, three.

When three play, the one on the left of the dealer is V, the one next him is M, and the dealer himself is H

When four play, the dealer takes no cards, and the player on his right is H

When five or six play, the dealer takes no cards, and gives cards only to the two players immediately on his left, who are V and M respectively, and to the one sitting next him on his right, who is H

The dealer is not allowed to peep at the skat cards, even if he is not playing, under a penalty of 10 points. If one of the active players sees one of the skat cards during the deal, he is not allowed to bid that hand. All minor irregularities in the deal, etc., will be found provided for in the Laws

## Naming the Trump

The privilege of selecting the game that shall be played and the suit that shall be the trump belongs naturally to V, and he always names the trump unless some one has a better game to offer

Before explaining the methods of bidding by which other players seek to obtain this privilege, which naturally belongs to V, it is important that the beginner should have some opportunity to become familiar with the principles already explained, and should engage in an actual game. This will compel him to count up the

pip value of the cards he wins and will give him some very necessary practice in reckoning up the number of matadores that he is "with" or "without." For this purpose there is no better training than the Simple Game, which is sometimes called Frage. Let us suppose the table to be made up of four players.

## THE SIMPLE GAME

### Or Frage

THE cards dealt, V takes the two skat cards into his hand, without showing or naming them to the other players, and after sorting his hand of twelve cards, picks out the suit that he would like to have for the trump. Having made his selection, he lays out two cards again, so as to reduce his hand to ten cards, but he does not show or name the cards laid out. Having laid out his skat, he announces the trump suit and leads for the first trick any card he pleases.

Players must follow suit if they can, but they are not obliged to head the trick unless they wish to, neither are they obliged to trump if they have none of the suit led.

Beginners must be especially careful to remember that the jacks belong to the trump suit, and that even if they have none of the trump suit itself, let us say diamonds, they must play the jack of clubs, spades, or hearts, if a diamond is led; because those cards are really diamonds. The penalty for a revoke, if not corrected in time, is the immediate loss of the game.

Of course the player knows how many points he has laid away in his skat, which will count for him at the



# Illustrative Hand No. 1

SIMPLE GAME, BY VORHAND

	♣ 8	
	♠ K Q	
	♥ J Q 9 8	
	♦ A Q 8	
♣ J 10		♣ K Q 9 7
♠ J 10 8 7		♠ 9
♥ 7		♥ A 10 K
♦ 10 K 9		♦ J 7

	M	
V		H
	D	

In skat; ♣ A, ♠ A.

V takes both skat cards into his hand, and lays out the ♦ 10 and the ♥ 7 for the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	<u>♣ J</u>	Q ♠	J ♦	7	
2	7 ♠	<u>K ♠</u>	9 ♠		4
3	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 8	♣ 9	11	
4	<u>J ♠</u>	♥ J	♣ 7	4	
5	<u>A ♠</u>	8 ♦	♣ Q	14	
6	<u>10 ♠</u>	♥ 8	♣ K	14	
7	<u>8 ♠</u>	♥ 9	7 ♦	—	
8	<u>♣ 10</u>	♥ Q	♥ K	17	
9	9 ♦	<u>Q ♦</u>	♥ A		14
10	K ♦	<u>A ♦</u>	♥ 10		25

V gets 67 in play and 10 in skat; winning his game.

In spades 3; 1 for game, 2 matadores, =  $3 \times 3 = 9$  points.

end of the hand, and he should mentally add to this the number of points he takes home in tricks, so that he may be able to judge what he must still make in order to reach or pass the necessary 61. Good players keep account of the adversaries' score also, but this requires long practice.

The partners who are opposed to the player must keep mental count of their joint score, but neither is allowed to inform the other how many they have. One of the partners gathers the tricks taken by either of them, but that need not prevent the other from watching what points go into them, because one never knows which of the two will have the opportunity to throw in the deciding counting-card at the critical moment. It is useless for them to keep account of the player's score, because they do not know what he has laid away in the skat.

In order to confirm the mental count, each side turns over and counts its points after the hand is finished, the player reckoning the skat cards for himself. The player must reach 61 to win his game; 60 is not enough.

Illustrative Hand No. 1 is a fair example of the Simple game. V takes both the skat cards into his hand and declares spades for trumps, because he has six of them. He lays away in the skat the 7 of hearts, so that he can trump that suit, and the 10 of diamonds, which might be caught by the adversaries.

V begins by leading his best trump. H having only one guard to the lowest jack, plays the J to the first trick, to let his partner know that V does not hold it. V knows that every trump is in play, because he has not put any in the skat, and he infers that M would not give up the Q if he had the 9, so H must have the 9. In order to avoid establishing the J of hearts against himself, V leads a small trump for the second round, and M puts on the K, which is worth 2 points more than the J. M then leads his singleton club, hoping his partner may have the ace of clubs, and can give him a ruff, so that he can save his heart jack. Knowing it must be a singleton, H just covers it, so as not to lose any more points than necessary. After that H discards all his clubs, so that his partner shall know what cards he still holds.

In all these diagrams the cards are given at the top of the page as they were dealt. In the diagram of the play, the cards actually held are shown.

V always leads for the first trick, and the underlined card wins the trick, the card under it being the next one led.

At the right of the diagrams all through this work will be found the points gained or lost by the player. What he wins is shown in the plus column; what he loses in the minus column.

## SCORING

At the end of the hand comes the part that is usually so confusing to the novice, and that is computing the value of the game. At first he may be assisted by the table of values which is printed at the head of the Skat scoring pads.

The trump suits have a different value attached to each, according to their rank. This is called the ground or unit value of the game. In the Simple Game these values are:

♦ 1;     ♥ 2;     ♠ 3;     ♣ 4.

If the player wins his game, by getting home 61 points or more, he is entitled to the number of points that the trump suit is worth as his unit of value. If he named spades, as in Illustrative Hand No. 1, the unit value of his game is 3. As he won the game he is entitled to 3 points for it.

But in addition to these 3 points for winning the game, he is entitled to as many more times that unit value as he was "with" or "without" matadores. It is usual to add the 1 for the game and the number of matadores all together, and call them "multipliers."

The winning of the game being always 1, and the

number of matadores never less than 1, it follows that the smallest possible game is twice the unit value.

In Illustrative Hand No. 1, the player had 2 matadores, so that he had 3 multipliers, and the value of his game was  $3 \times 3 = 9$ .

If the player is fortunate enough to get 91 points or more, so that his adversaries do not get "out of schneider," as it is called, the player adds one more multiplier, and reckons his hand as; 1 for the game, 1 for schneider, with 3, = 5 times the unit value.

For the purpose of keeping the score, a sheet of paper or a card ruled into four columns is used. At the head of each column a player's name is written and under his name the amount he wins or loses, when he is the player. Only the score of the actual player is entered, and that is put down as a plus when he wins, or as a minus when he loses. The second item to be entered in the same column is not put down individually, but is added to or deducted from the previous amount, so that the bottom figure in each column shows the exact state of the player's score.

Suppose that four players are engaged, and that this is the state of the score after the tenth deal:

<i>Smith</i>	<i>Jones</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Green</i>
+ 24	- 20	+ 16	+ 12
+ 60	- 36	- 4	
+ 96	- 12	+ 16	

This shows that Smith has played three games, winning 24 on the first and 36 on each of the others. Jones lost 20 and then lost 16, after which he won 24. Brown won 16 and then lost 20 and then won 20, while Green has played 'only one game, which he won.

While any sheet of paper will do to keep the scores on, it is well to have the table of trump values at the head of it, in case of dispute. The Foster Skat Scorers have the full table of unit values printed in convenient form at the top, and also have the principal rules of the game on the back.

There are several ways of balancing the scores at the end of the sitting, but the simplest will be found the best for all purposes.

Call the lowest score 0, and add what he has lost to the scores of each of the others. Add together the total of the winnings that this new result shows, and put it down. Then multiply each player's total by the number of players on the score sheet, and deduct the amount of the total winnings from each. This will give what each owes or wins.

For example: Take the score we have for Smith, Jones, Brown, and Green. As Jones is the lowest, call him zero and add his amount to that of each of the others, and then add up the total winnings thus found. This gives us:

<i>Smith</i>	<i>Jones</i>	<i>Brown</i>	<i>Green</i>
+ 96	- 12	+ 16	+ 12
+ 108	0	+ 28	+ 24 = 160
4	4	4	4
+ 432	+ 0	+ 112	+ 96
- 160	- 160	- 160	- 160
+ 272	- 160	- 48	- 64

After we have multiplied each man's winnings by the number of players, in this case 4, we deduct the 160, our total, from each, and the account balances. Smith wins everything, 272 points, while Jones, Brown, and Green each have to contribute their share.

If there are only three players, the multiplication is by 3. Suppose the result to be:

<i>Smith</i>	<i>Jones</i>	<i>Brown</i>
+ 348	- 86	- 110
+ 458	+ 24	+ 0 = 482
3	3	3
+ 1374	+ 72	+ 0
- 482	- 482	- 482
+ 892	- 410	- 482

In this case, the lowest score is Brown's, and as Jones has not lost so much as Brown, he is put down as winning the difference between them, 24 points. Here our total winnings are 482, the amount to be deducted from each player after multiplying his score by 3.

## BIDDING

AFTER a little practice at this simple game, in which V always takes the two skat cards, the novice will have learned something about the way the play goes, and will be able to form some general idea of the value of a hand. He will also be impressed by the importance of knowing what is in the skat, and the advantage of being able to lay away in it cards which would otherwise fall to the enemy.

With this foundation to go upon, he will be better able to understand the next step, which is bidding for the privilege of naming the trump suit.

Let us suppose that the game is still Simple, but instead of allowing V to take up the skat cards and pick out the trump, let us see what the others would have to do in order to get the play themselves, by bidding for it. These bids will have to be made without seeing or touching the skat cards of course, because it will not be known until the bidding is at an end which player is entitled to them. This will require a player to have such cards that he is willing to take the risk of the play, even if he should find cards in the skat that were of no help to him.

If no one bids, V still retains his privilege, so the



bids must be made to him, and M has the first say. H does not say a word until M has either been disposed of by V or has taken the privilege away from him, because H must bid to the survivor of the first round.

Suppose this was the distribution of the cards:

	♣ J		
	♠ A K		
	♥ K Q		
	♦ J 10 Q 8 7		
♣ K Q 9 8 7			♣ 10
♠ Q 8 7			♠ J 10 9
♥ —————			♥ J 10 9 8 7
♦ A 9			♦ K

In Skat; ♣ A and ♥ A.

M has a good hand in diamonds, and bids diamonds. This compels V to declare himself. With the six highest clubs out against him and only one ace in his hand, it would be folly for him to say he would play in clubs, not knowing what was in the skat, so he passes.

This leaves M in possession of the privilege, but H still has a chance to bid. This player has a fairly strong heart hand and he bids hearts to M, not to V, who is out of it. As hearts outrank diamonds in value, M must either pass, or offer to play a better game than the one he named, diamonds. As he cannot improve upon his first bid, he passes, and there being no

one else to oppose him, H becomes the player, and takes up the skat cards.

This does not mean that H must play hearts, but he must play some game as valuable as hearts. Before making his final decision he looks at the skat cards. Should he be so fortunate as to find the A and K of spades in the skat, he might change his mind about hearts and declare spades, because he can win more with spades for trumps, on account of the greater unit value of the game. Spades being a still more valuable game than his bid, hearts, he may play it, but he cannot go back to diamonds, no matter what is in the skat.

Finding two aces, he concludes to stand by the hearts, and lays away in the skat the 10 of spades and the singleton diamond, keeping in his hand seven trumps, the A 10 of clubs, and the 9 of spades.

Here are a few examples of the kind of hands on which a player might bid Simple in the various suits named under them:

♣ J 10  
 ♠ A Q  
 ♥ 10 9  
 ♦ J Q 9 8  
 Diamonds.

♣ 10 Q  
 ♠ 10  
 ♥ J 10 9 8 7  
 ♦ J K  
 Hearts.

♣ J  
 ♠ J Q 9  
 ♥ 9 8  
 ♦ J 10 9 8  
 Spades.

♣ Q 9 8  
 ♠ J 10  
 ♥ J K Q  
 ♦ J 8  
 Clubs.

The player should study carefully the natural order of the bids and the conversation of the game in bidding. The chief things to pay attention to are these

V always has the play if no one else bids for it, and M is always the first one to say whether he will bid or pass. H is not allowed to say anything until M has declared himself. Should M forget that it is his turn, or be inattentive, V may call his attention to it by saying, "I am Vorhand." When M passes, or ceases bidding, it becomes H's turn to bid to V.

When a player bids to V, it is really in the form of a question, because what he wishes to know is, is the game that V has as good as the one his questioner can offer. It is much as if M said to him, "How good is your game? Is it spades?" This means, "If your game is not as good as spades, I am willing to try something as good as spades myself." In fact, that is the manner in which the bidding was originally conducted, the players asking, "Is it so-and-so?" The natural reply to this question is "Yes," or "No," and this answer is still the custom.

Persons who are not familiar with the game think that when they bid and the player says "No," he means, "No, you cannot have it", but the actual meaning is, "No, my game is not as good as that."

When V says "Yes," M must bid a higher game or pass. There is no limit to the number of times a player may bid, but each bid must be better than

the last which has met the answer, "Yes." When M stops, or V passes, there is no use in H's offering anything but a better game than the last mentioned, because the player would not be allowed to pass if he did, he being bound to see that as good a game is played as that on which he holds it, or a better one.

If a player takes a chance and bids spades, so as to get the play, and after picking up the skat cards finds he has an invincible game in hearts, he cannot play hearts, because it is not as good a game as the one on which he got the privilege by bidding for it. He could play clubs after having bid spades, because clubs are more valuable than spades, but he cannot go backward.

While this may seem a little complicated in the explanation, it is not so in practice, and players soon become accustomed to it, and at the same time they get fixed in mind the order of the suits and the way in which clubs, spades, hearts, and diamonds always outrank one another.

In actual practice, the Simple game is seldom or never played, its value being so small, but it is most useful as a preliminary exercise in the mechanical details of the game, and I am of the opinion that every person who wishes to be a skat-player should begin by playing nothing but Simple games, until he is quite at home with the order of dealing, bidding, playing, the rank of the suits, the method of reckoning matadores, and the ways of keeping the score.

## TOURNEE

### Or, Turning up the Trump

WE come now to another method of determining the trump. Instead of the Simple game, in which the player takes both the skat cards into his hand and examines them before making his final decision as to the game he will play, the successful bidder turns up one of the skat cards, whichever he pleases, and the suit to which it belongs is the trump suit for that deal.

This involves a certain amount of risk, of course; because the card turned up may not be adapted to the hand at all, and it is therefore unwise for a person to bid Tournee unless he is willing for at least any one of three suits to turn up. The following are fair examples of hands on which Tournee might be bid:

♣ J Q 9  
 ♠ J 10  
 ♥ J Q 9  
 ♦ J 10  
 No ace, but 4 Js.

♣ 10 Q  
 ♠ A  
 ♥ J A 10 Q  
 ♦ J K Q  
 All suits strong. 2 Js  
 and 2 aces.

♣ J Q 9  
 ♠ J 9 8  
 ♥ J Q 9  
 ♦ 10  
 3 Js, and 3 suits.

♣ —————  
 ♠ A 10 9  
 ♥ A 9 8  
 ♦ J A Q 8  
 Even if you turn a Club, out-  
 side cards should win.

♣ A  
 ♠ A 10 K  
 ♥ A 9 8  
 ♦ 10 K 7

All suits strong, but no Js.

♣ J K 7  
 ♠ A K  
 ♥ J A 9  
 ♦ K Q

An ideal Tournee hand; all suits.

Because the Tournee is more risky than the Simple game, it has a higher unit value, the suits being worth:

♦ 5;    ♥ 6;    ♠ 7;    ♣ 8.

The multipliers remain the same, so that a player turning up a club and winning his game with two matadores would score  $3 \times 8 = 24$  points.

As skat is now played, Tournee is the lowest game allowed, and, as the lowest Tournee, diamonds, must be worth 10, that is the smallest game that a player can win or lose.

## Bidding for Tournee

There are two methods of bidding in skat; that by suits, which has already been explained in connection with the Simple game, and that by values or figures. Bidding by suits is no longer permitted by first-class players, nor in any of the big skat tournaments, and in the following pages all the bidding will be by figures. In many parts of Germany they still adhere to the bidding by suits, and it is occasionally met with in other countries, so that every player should understand it.

The various changes in some of the bidding values, and the reasons for them, will be discussed in their proper place. For the present the following brief explanation of bidding by numbers must suffice.

The idea in skat being to let the player who has the most valuable game have the privilege of trying it, it is obvious that this idea was very badly carried out in bidding by suits; because, although one might be willing to play clubs with one matadore, another might be willing to play hearts without four. While clubs is the better suit, and would outrank a bid of hearts, the 2 multipliers in clubs make the game worth only 16, whereas the 5 multipliers in hearts make it worth 30, or almost double.

For this reason, in the modern game, all bidding is by numbers, and each player who makes an offer, instead of naming any suit, starts with some figure which is well within the value of the game which he intends to play. The figures also enable him to conceal his true purpose, because he can bid 10 and jump to 15, as if he were thinking of diamonds, when his intention is to play clubs at 16.

The lowest possible game being worth 10, the lowest bid must be 10, and it is usual for M to begin with that figure. In this he is safe, if he has anything at all, because no matter what suit he turns up, he cannot have overbid his hand.

If V says "Yes," which means, "I have ten my-

self," M must go higher, and it is the rule that in progressing he shall name some figure which is the value of an actual game. He cannot bid 11 or 13, for instance, because there is no such game value. He must bid some multiple of a unit value or pass.

V may continue to answer "Yes" as long as he thinks he has as good a game himself; or he may say "Yes" as a bluff, hoping to induce M to overbid his hand, but such a proceeding is dangerous. Eventually either V or M must pass, and as soon as one does so, H enters the field, but he is not allowed to make any bid which is not higher than the last named by the player who holds the privilege. If M has said 16, and V has said "Yes," H must bid more than 16. It is necessary to remember the figure at which the player gets the game, as it will often be found that he has overbid his hand. If he has, he loses his game.

As an illustration of this bidding for Tournée, take the following position of the cards:

	♣ K	
	♦ 10 9	
	♥ K Q 9 8	
	◇ Q 9 8	
♣ A Q 8		♣ J 10 9 7
♦ ———		♦ J A K Q
♥ J A 10 7		♥ ———
◇ J 10 7		◇ A K

	M	
V		H
	D	

In Skat; ♠ 7 and 8.



M has no game, so he passes without a bid. H starts out with the conventional 10, to which V makes the usual reply, "Yes." H advances to 12 and V still holds it, as he has two jacks and two aces, always a fair Tournee hand. H is now driven to taking a chance on turning one of the black suits, so he bids 14. This V is afraid to risk, because if he turns a spade he must lose, and if H turns anything but a spade, V will probably be strong enough to beat him, so V passes.

There is another reason why V should be cautious. Although his game is "without" 2, and he would therefore have 3 multipliers, he might find one of the higher J's in the skat, which would reduce the value of his game. H, on the contrary, is certain of his multipliers, because he has them in his hand, and anything that he finds in the skat can only increase the value of his game, if he wins it. If necessary, he could bid up to 21,  $3 \times 7$ . If he gets the play for 15 or 18 he will not have overbid his hand even if he turns a diamond or a heart. As it happens, H turns a spade, and lays out the club 10 and diamond K.

In bidding by numbers, the successful bidder must win a game which adds to his score at least as much as he bid. It does not matter how much more he wins, but he must not get less, or he loses, not what he bid, but what he would have had to win to make his bid good. An illustration will probably make this clear.

Suppose a player bids 12 and turns a diamond. As the unit value of a diamond Tournee is only 5, he must have three multipliers of some kind in order to reach 15, because if he wins a game of only 10 he has overbid his hand. If he fails to win a game of 15, he loses 15, not 12, which he bid, because 12 is not the value of any diamond game which would have made his bid good. See Law No. 61.

Had he bid 12 and turned a heart, the lowest value of which is 12, he could not have lost any more than he bid unless he lost a game on which he stood to win more than 12. But suppose that after turning a heart he lost his game and it was found that he was playing "without" 3, his game was worth  $4 \times 6 = 24$ , and he would have to lose 24, even though he bid only 12.

The point is that the player must lose what he would have won if he had succeeded in making good his bid.

As to the hands on which Tournee may bid.

As a rule, it is unsafe to bid a Tournee without any jacks. Counting aces and jacks together as one each, the hand should equal 4 to be a safe Tournee bid. This would include all such combinations as 3 jacks and 1 ace, 2 jacks and 2 aces, or 1 jack and 3 aces. To bid Tournee, a player should have three suits in his hand, any of which he would be willing to make the trump with the assistance of another card from the skat, which would be the turn up, of course.

Tournee should seldom be bid on two suits; never on one, because it is so improbable that the turn-up will fit the hand. The illustrations already given are fair examples of safe Tournee bids, and others will be found in the Illustrative Hands.

## LAYING OUT FOR THE SKAT

It is very important that the player should early make himself master of the principles of laying out for the skat.

The advantage of being able to lay away certain cards is, that cards which would or might be caught by the adversaries if kept in the hand of the player, are absolutely safe, and certain to count toward the all essential 61, if they are laid away in the skat. At the same time, it must not be imagined that cards should be laid away simply because they are valuable, because they might be more valuable as trick-winners and lead-getters. It is not because they are valuable that they are laid away, but only because they are in danger. It would be just as foolish to lay away a 10 that was perfectly safe, as it would be to put the jack of clubs in the skat.

This is particularly true of aces, and it is an axiom among skat-players never to lay an ace, except the ace of trumps, unless the 10 of the same suit is laid away with it, and then only when both cards are in danger.

It sometimes happens, when the tournee is unfortunate, that the high counting trumps are in evident

danger, there not being jacks enough to cover them from attack. The best thing to be done with them in such cases is to put them in the skat.

Illustrative Hand No. 2 is a good example of this principle carried out in practice.

With 2 J's and 3 aces H has a very safe tournee bid, but he is unfortunate in turning up the only suit of which he has none in his hand. With so few trumps, it is evident that his high ones are in danger; because if he leads J's the adversaries will play small cards and keep their J's to capture the counting cards. But J's will not win his other high cards while the players can follow suit, and as the suits are not long, there is every probability that they will be able to follow suit. The plain suits being in less danger than the trumps, the trumps are put in the skat.

With regard to the play of this hand, V knows it is bad policy to lead unguarded 10's, even if there does not seem much chance to save them; but it is good policy to lead trumps when you are long in them, especially if you suspect that the tournee is a weak one. A trump lead often prevents the player from saving what few trumps he has by ruffing the adversaries' good cards. By beginning with a J, V prevents the player from getting home any counting trumps.

Upon getting into the lead, there is nothing for H to do but to make his aces, beginning with the suit in

which he has the 10 also, and following it with the ace which is accompanied by the K, hoping to drop the 10.

By judicious laying away and prompt leading, the player not only wins his game, but makes his adversaries schneider.

High cards of plain suits are often in danger from the fact that the suit is long, and is therefore likely to be ruffed by the adversaries. If the player is very strong in trumps, a long suit is an advantage, because it must win tricks or force out trumps that cannot be caught; but when the player's trumps are weak, he cannot expect to save high cards of a long plain suit, and if they are not trumped he may be forced to discard them. In such cases, it is better to lay these good cards in the skat. With A 10 K, for instance, both A and 10 may be laid away, as the K still commands the suit.

It sometimes happens that both the high trumps and the high cards of a plain suit are in danger. In such cases it is better not to guess which to lay away, but to save one of each.

Illustrative Hand No. 3 is an example of such a case. V has not much of a game, but as he gets the play for nothing, he does not risk anything, and there seems no better policy than to try a tournee. It is unfortunate, but his side cards are strong, even if he has but four trumps.

## Illustrative Hand No. 2

SPADE TOURNEE, BY HINTERHAND

<p>♣ K Q          ♠ J 9 8 7          ♥ J 10          ♦ 9 7</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="margin: 0;">M</p> <p style="margin: 0;">V                  H</p> <p style="margin: 0;">D</p> </div>	<p>♣ 8 7          ♣ K Q          ♥ K Q 9 8          ♦ 10 Q</p> <p>♣ J A 10 9          ♠ —————          ♥ A 7          ♦ J A K 8</p>
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In skat; ♠ A 10.

M passes; H bids 10; V passes. H is the player.  
 H turns a spade, and lays ♠ A 10 in the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	—
1	J ♠	Q ♠	♣ J	7	
2	♣ Q	♣ 7	♣ A	14	
3	♣ K	♣ 8	♣ 10	14	
4	7 ♦	Q ♦	A ♦	14	
5	♥ 10	♥ 8	♥ A	21	
6	9 ♦	♥ K	♥ 7		4
7	♥ J	K ♠	J ♦		8
8	9 ♠	♥ 9	♣ 9		—
9	8 ♠	10 ♦	8 ♦		10
10	7 ♠	♥ Q	K ♦		7

H gets 70 in play and 21 in skat, 91; schneider.

1 for game, 1 for schneider, with 1, =  $3 \times 7 = 21$  points.

V cannot lay away both his high trumps in this case, because he has a plain suit which is in even greater danger, on account of its length. He therefore divides his precautions, and lays away one trump and one club. Observe that he does not lay away the ace of the plain suit, even if it would count a point more, because the play of the 10 would at once betray to his adversaries what he had put in the skat. He does not care how soon they find out that he does not hold the ace of trumps.

V opens the hand with a small trump, on which he knows the adversaries cannot get home any high counting cards. What he hopes for is the opportunity to ruff a diamond, and save his 10.

H wins his partner's trick, so as to get the player between them, and then leads his longest suit through him. He begins with the K, so as to protect his 10 by forcing out the ace, if the player has it. After trumping this trick, V tries to catch the spade 10. Failing in that he "runs" with his clubs. H, on getting in again, sees that the player must be weak in trumps, so he leads trumps through him, and V is fortunate in getting home just points enough to win his game. Judicious laying out saved him.

When there is no special danger in the trump suit, and none of the plain suits are particularly long, the player should lay out counting cards which are doubtful trick-winners, even though they may not be in



# Illustrative Hand No. 3

HEART TOURNEE, BY VORHAND

♣ 9 8			♣ 7
♠ J 10 7			♠ 8
♥ J K			♥ Q 9 8
♦ A Q 7			♦ J 10 K 9 8
♣ J A 10 K Q			
♠ A K Q 9			
♥ 10			
♦ ———			

	M	
V		H
	D	

In skat; ♥ A 7.

M and H both pass, and V is the player. V turns a heart, and lays ♥ A and ♣ 10 in the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♥ 7	♥ K	<u>J ♦</u>		6
2	<u>♥ 10</u>	7 ♦	K ♦	14	
3	<u>A ♠</u>	7 ♠	8 ♠	11	
4	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 8	♣ 7	11	
5	♣ Q	♣ 9	<u>♥ Q</u>		6
6	♣ J	♥ J	♥ 9	4	
7	♣ K	Q ♦	<u>♥ 8</u>		7
8	9 ♠	<u>A ♦</u>	8 ♦		11
9	Q ♠	<u>J ♠</u>	10 ♦		15
10	K ♠	<u>10 ♠</u>	9 ♦		14

V gets 40 in play and 21 in skat; 61, winning his game. Hearts worth 6; 1 for game; "with" 1, =, 2×6=12 points.

absolute or evident danger. Unguarded 10's are particularly desirable cards to lay away, and next to them come 10's of suits in which the player does not hold the ace. It does not follow because you have both 10 and K that you will force the ace with the K and make the 10; because a sharp adversary will not give up the ace until he is sure he cannot catch your 10.

It is usually better to lay away a blank 10, or one that is singly guarded, than a high trump; because the trump may be saved by ruffing; but the 10 is hopeless. If you can lay away a whole suit by putting the 10 and another in the skat, you are in a very good position to save your high trump by ruffing that suit.

Illustrative Hand No. 4 is an example of this system of laying out for the skat. With 2 J's and 2 aces, V has a very good tournee hand. The 10 of trumps being in no danger with two J's and two smaller trumps to guard it, he puts the 10 of diamonds in a place of safety, getting rid of an entire suit at the same time. Even if a player is not anxious to save any of his high trumps by ruffing, a missing suit is often useful in allowing him to discard worthless little cards, which, if kept, would have to be played to the adversaries' high cards. This is just as good as ruffing, and sometimes even better.

In the play, V begins with the best trump, so as to be sure of two rounds. H gives up the lowest J, just

## Illustrative Hand No. 4

CLUB TOURNEE, BY VORHAND

<p>♣ J 10          ♠ A K          ♥ J A K 9          ♦ 10 9</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="margin: 0;">M</p> <p style="margin: 0;">V                  H</p> <p style="margin: 0;">D</p> </div>	<p>♣ 8          ♠ 9 8          ♥ 10 Q 8          ♦ J A 8 7</p>
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In skat; ♣ K Q.

M and H both pass. V is the player. V turns a club, and lays ♦ 10 9 in the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♣ J	♣ 7	J ♦	4	
2	♣ Q	♣ A	♣ 8		14
3	♥ K	♥ 7	♥ Q	7	
4	♥ J	J ♠	A ♦		15
5	♣ 10	♣ 9	7 ♦	10	
6	♥ A	7 ♠	♥ 8	11	
7	♥ 9	K ♦	♥ 10		14
8	K ♠	10 ♠	9 ♠		14
9	♣ K	Q ♦	8 ♦	7	
10	A ♠	Q ♠	8 ♠	14	

V gets 53 in play and 10 in skat; 63, winning his game. Clubs worth 8; 1 for game, "with" 1, =  $2 \times 8 = 16$  points.

as he did in Illustrative Hand No. 1, and M makes the same play as in that hand, leading his short suit up to the player. V does not play his ace, but holds the command of the suit, winning the trick with the K. At trick 4, there being only two trumps to come, the 9 and a jack, V leads the jack, which will force out the trump more cheaply than leading the K. All these little points are valuable, and one should never waste the 4 points that a K is worth when the 2 points of a J will do as well.

On this trick, H discards, or "fattens" his partner's trick, with the ace of diamonds, in preference to the 10 of hearts, because when a player has had an opportunity to lay away cards in the skat, it is always more likely that he has laid away the suit of which you have the ace, than the suit of which you have the 10. H knows that M has no more hearts, because with two or more he would have led the higher cards first.

In order to avoid putting his partner's possible counting cards in danger, and also to avoid leading away from his own spade 10, M must put the player in with a trump. At the end, as the player has the game won, even if he loses the K of spades to the 10, he must play the K.

When the player holds 10 and small in one suit, and a single small card in another suit, it is bad policy to discard the 10 and small, because the adversaries can

pile up 21 points on the trick in which you have one small card. But if the singleton is laid away, keeping the small card of the 10 suit, the most they can get on that card is 15 points. All these little details need attention in skat.

## LEADING IN TOURNEE

ONE of the golden rules in skat is, that the player should always lead trumps. The Germans express this by the adage, "Fordern ist die Seele des Spiels."

The trump lead is the best when the player is strong, because it protects his good cards in plain suits. It is the best when he is weak, because it gets out two adverse trumps for one of his own, and if it accomplishes nothing else, it conceals his weakness from his foes, as in Illustrative Hand No. 3. Had H suspected any weakness, he could have defeated the player very easily by returning the trump lead at once.

With the best trumps, it is just as well to have one or two rounds immediately; but the player should be careful not to leave one adversary with the best trump on the third round and his partner with none, or the partner will be able to fatten the trick. With only the best trump, or the two best, and not enough to exhaust trumps, it is safer to lead the best trump first and then a small one, so as to retain the command of the trump suit, as in Illustrative Hand No. 4.

The method of leading jacks will be gone into when we come to solos, in which their management is much more important than it is in tournee.

### Adversaries' Play

The adversaries should try above all things to get the player between them, or "in the middle" as it is called. This keeps him guessing as to whether or not he should try to win tricks with cards which are not the best of the suit, or should trump tricks which are not valuable, or should discard counting cards on them. When the player is in the middle, he has not the advantage of being able to get rid of losing cards on tricks that he does not want; tricks that have not enough in them to be worth trumping. He is also in doubt about the advisability of trumping with good counting trumps, because he may be over-trumped and lose them.

In order to keep the player in the middle, if possible, long suits should always be led through him by the adversary sitting on his right, because if the player will not go in on the first lead, the long suit can be continued, placing him at a still further disadvantage.

When the player is not in the middle, it is better to lead short suits up to him, because either that is the partner's long suit, or the leader of it can trump it if it is led again by the player himself, or through the player by the partner. Illustrative Hands Nos. 1 and 4 are good examples of leading a short suit up to the player in this manner.

Illustrative Hand No. 5 is an example of leading a long suit through the player, who in this case happens to be in the middle at the start. Every time that V gets into the lead again, he goes through with that terrible long suit of clubs, on which the player in Mittelhand has to fritter away his trumps.

In this hand, M lays out two 10's for the skat, because his 10 of trumps is in no danger, while the singleton 10 of clubs is, and the spade suit is too long to hope to win tricks with both A and 10 of it.

In leading, observe that V, while selecting his long suit, does not begin with the ace of it, because he has so many that it is certain M has laid away the 10, if he ever held it. If H has the 10, M will trump the ace and catch the 10 at the same time.

M does not want to trump such a worthless card as the 7 of clubs, so he discards, and H fattens his partner's trick with the ace of a suit of which he also holds the 10. V does not lead the ace for the second trick, for fear M would put on the best trump, and shut H out, but he leads a counting card. This M trumps, so as to force a J from H. The trick is not worth over-trumping, and H does not want the lead. Upon being forced in on the next trick, and having no short suit to lead up to the player, H avoids giving up his advantage in the red suits, of which he holds command and "tenace" (a term which will be ex-



# Illustrative Hand No. 5

DIAMOND TOURNEE, BY MITTELHAND

	♣ 10		
	♠ J A 10 K		
	♥ J K 9 8		
	♦ J		
♣ A K Q 9 8 7		M	
♠ ———		V	H
♥ 7			
♦ Q 9 8		D	
			♣ J
			♠ Q 9 8 7
			♥ A 10 Q
			♦ A K

In skat; ♦ 10 7.

M bids 10. V and H both pass. M is the player. M turns a Diamond, and lays ♣ 10 and ♠ 10 in the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♣ 7	♥ 8	♥ A		11
2	♣ K	J ♦	7 ♠	6	
3	Q ♦	♥ J	♣ J		7
4	8 ♦	K ♠	8 ♠		4
5	♣ Q	7 ♦	A ♦		14
6	9 ♦	A ♠	Q ♠		14
7	♣ 9	10 ♦	9 ♠	10	
8	♥ 7	J ♠	K ♦	6	
9	♣ A	♥ 9	♥ Q		14
10	♣ 8	♥ K	♥ 10		14

M gets 22 in play and 20 in skat, 42; losing his game.

Diamonds worth 5; 1 for game, "without" 1, = 2 × 5 - 10 points.

plained in a moment), and leads a suit in which he has neither ace nor ten.

At the fifth trick, M cannot afford to ruff with the best trump, because he will probably lose his 10 if he does, and he sees that he must lose both his hearts in any case, so he allows himself to be over-trumped. Had he trumped in with the J, he would have been made schneider.

The partners should try to lead in such a manner as not to bring each other's high counting cards into danger, but to force out the command of their long suit as soon as possible, leading the K from 10 K and others, as in Illustrative Hand No. 3. It is not wise to begin with the ace of a suit which is long, because in *tournee* the player has almost certainly laid away that suit and is ready to trump it.

If the player in *tournee* has already followed to two suits, the adversaries should be wary about leading or playing high counting cards of the third suit, even if they are not long in it; because it is very seldom indeed that the player will have cards of all three plain suits left in his hand, unless he has the ace of the third suit.

If the player has been in the lead and has not led trumps, especially if he leads aces and tens of plain suits, the adversaries should lead trumps at the first opportunity, especially if they can lead through the player. There must be some disadvantage in leading

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trumps, or the player would do it. The difficulty usually is to get into the lead when the player keeps on with such high cards; but if it can be done, and the player's trumps caught, the adversaries will frequently succeed in making tricks with their suit and forcing the player to discard his counting cards on those tricks.

When one adversary is in the lead, his partner must use some judgment in fattening. The discard of an ace usually shows the 10 of the same suit, as in Illustrative Hand No. 5; or else the one who fattens has reason to believe that the player has laid away the 10, as in Illustrative Hand No. 4, in which H fattens with the diamond A, although he has not the 10 with it. Partners should seize every opportunity to fatten with unguarded tens, and with counting cards of suits which the player has already trumped, or renounced in.

## TENACE

THERE are certain combinations of cards which it is very undesirable to lead away from if it can be helped, and it is very important for both the player and the partners to understand the value of a "tenace," and the necessity of keeping the second-best of a suit guarded.

A tenace is the best and third-best of the unplayed cards, when held by the same player. If the suit has not been led at all, the tenace would be A K. If the ace has been played, the 10 and Q become a tenace, as in *Hinterhand's hearts*, Illustrative Hand No. 5.

The advantage of a tenace lies in the fact that if the suit is led up to it, both A and K must win tricks, because if the 10 is not played, the K wins the first round and the A is still the best of the suit. If the 10 is played, the ace wins it, and the K remains the best of the suit.

If the player holding the tenace leads it, the ace is the only trick he is sure of.

The second-best of a suit, guarded, is good for a trick if it is led up to; because if the ace is played to shut out the 10, the 10 becomes the best of the suit. If the ace is not played, the 10 wins.

When a player holds both these combinations, a tenace and a second-best guarded, each in a different

suit, it is better to give up the second-best suit than to lead away from the tenace. We shall come to an example of this presently in Illustrative Hand No. 10, in which V leads his singly-guarded 10 of diamonds in order to keep his A K of spades, which the adversaries will have to lead up to.

If the suit in which the player holds tenace is led through him, he may either finesse the K, hoping the 10 is on his right, or he may put the ace on at once for fear of its being trumped if he keeps it too long. The card led and the general situation will usually guide him as to which to do, but the position is always difficult and is a good illustration of the disadvantage of being in the middle, a position in which it is to the interest of the adversaries to place the player as often and as long as possible.

When either of the adversaries holds a tenace, it is not likely to be of much use unless it can be inferred that the player has cards of that suit, because if the player in a tournee held a 10 which was insufficiently guarded he would probably have laid it away. In any case, he would be very unlikely to lead the suit himself, knowing that tenace was out against him. As a partner always plays after you, there is no use trying to prevent him from making the 10, and if you have both A and K it is usually better to put the ace right on, or you may lose it. If the 10 is on your right, it is either too well guarded to be caught, or your partner will be able to trump it.

## PASST-MIR-NICHT

### Does Not Fit

A VERY popular variety of the Tournee, although not always played, is to allow the successful bidder to choose one of the skat cards by drawing it toward him, but without turning it up until he has examined it to see if it fits his hand. He does not even show the card to the other players, but he must not mix it with his hand in any way. If it suits him, he turns it up, and that is the trump, and he then takes up the other skat card, just as in any ordinary Tournee.

But if it does not suit him, he says so, or he can simply signify the fact by putting it into his hand without showing it, which will compel him to turn up the other skat card and to abide by its decision, even if it is of the same suit as the first.

The unit value of a Passt-Mir-Nicht is precisely the same as that of the ordinary Tournee, if the player wins it; but if he fails to win his game he loses double. Whether it is a failure to get 61, or a failure to make good his bid, does not matter; in either case he loses double if the first card does not suit him, and the second is the trump.

Suppose the player has risked a Tournee with only

two suits, say clubs and spades, and the two best jacks. The first card he picks up is a heart, which he puts into his hand without showing it. Then he turns over the other skat card, and it is a diamond. He must play a diamond Tournee with two, which costs  $3 \times 5 = 15$ . If he wins his game, he scores those 15 points; but if he loses it, he loses 30. The value of his game is always calculated just as it would be in an ordinary Tournee, and it is only when he loses it that he loses double. The adversaries should be careful to note the occasions on which the player has turned up the second card, as the double charge is often overlooked at the end of the hand, when it comes to putting down the score.

Many persons think it better to risk the loss of the game, if the first card does not suit them, than to risk double on the chance that the next card will win for them. They argue that if the second card is different from the first, you cannot get more than one trump out of the skat. If it is the same as the first, you might as well have turned up the first one. While this sounds well, if the player is sound in his bidding, and does not offer a tournee unless he has a fair chance in three suits, the second card will either suit his hand or it will give him two trumps in his weak suit, which may enable him to win his game, even in a suit which he does not want.

It is a mistake to force one's self to play a game that

does not fit the hand, just because one is afraid of losing double, although some prefer certain loss to speculation. Illustrative Hand No. 17 is an example of a case in which the bidder should have played Passt-Mir-Nicht, instead of risking the game he did play. Had he done so, he would probably have made the adversaries schneider, instead of being himself made schwarz.

### Tournee Grand

If the successful bidder turns up a jack, whether it be the first card or a Passt-Mir-Nicht, he has the privilege of saying whether the suit to which the jack belongs shall be the trump, or whether jacks only shall be trumps.

As his decision must depend largely upon a proper understanding of the possibilities of winning a game in which jacks only are trumps, the reader is advised not to trouble himself with this declaration of Tournee Grand until he has mastered the principles of play which will be found farther on, in the chapter devoted to Grand. After some examples of natural or Solo Grands, and their proper management, will be found one or two illustrations of Tournee Grands.

### Abandoned Hands

A player who has made a bad tournee on the first card is allowed to strike his colours without playing a



# Illustrative Hand No. 6

SPADE TOURNEE, BY VORHAND

	♣ K 9		
	♠ J A K 8		
	♥ 10 K 9		
	♦ J		
♣ A 10			♣ J Q 8 7
♠ —			♠ 10 Q 9
♥ A Q 8			♥ J 7
♦ A K Q 9 8			♦ 7

	M	
V		H
	D	

In skat; ♠ 7, ♦ 10.

M bids 10 and passes. H passes. V is the player. V turns ♠ 7, and lays ♦ A 10 in the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	—
1	<u>8 ♦</u>	♥ 10	7 ♦	10	
2	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 9	♣ 7	11	
3	<u>♣ 10</u>	♣ K	♣ 8	14	
4	<u>♥ A</u>	♥ 9	♥ 7	11	
5	7 ♠	<u>A ♠</u>	10 ♠		21
6	♥ 8	8 ♠	♣ J		2
7	9 ♦	♥ K	♣ Q		7
8	Q ♦	K ♠	♥ J		9
9	♥ Q	<u>J ♦</u>	Q ♠		8
10	K ♦	<u>J ♠</u>	9 ♠		6

V gets 46 in play and 21 in skat, 67; winning his game. Spades worth 7; 1 for game, "without" 10, =  $11 \times 7 = 77$  points.

card, if he is afraid of being made schneider. If he abandons his game as hopeless in this manner, he is charged with the loss of the game, with whatever matadores he holds or does not hold, but he cannot be charged with the loss of schneider, even if the adversaries can demonstrate that they must have made him schneider. All he can lose is what he would have lost if he had played the hand and got home something between 31 and 60 points.

As a rule, it is an evidence of bad judgment in bidding, or that the player has been bluffing in refusing, when he has a hand that must be abandoned without a struggle. Illustrative Hand No. 6 is given as an example of what a little nerve will sometimes accomplish.

The turn is unfortunate, so much so that the player does not care to risk the second card, which might be of the same suit. There is not much danger of his being made schneider, so that there is no necessity to abandon the hand to save a trifle of 7 points, when there is a loss of 77 staring him in the face.

The player's only hope, in such a case, is, of course, to save himself by a feint. The 7 of diamonds is out in the hand of one adversary or the other. If H is the player that holds the card, and V leads the 8, M will inevitably fatten what looks like a certainty to be his partner's trick. If he does, and V can get home the 30 points he has in his own hand, that will be

enough, with the 21 that he has laid away in the skat, to win his game.

It is needless to say that almost any one would have been alarmed at the prospect of being caught "without" 10, and would have played this hand as a Passt-Mir-Nicht; but it shows what is possible in Skat.

## SOLO

### Playing Without the Skat Cards

If it is unsafe to bid Tournee without some strength in two or three suits at least, and if the Simple game is not allowed, it is obvious that the player with only one good suit in his cards could not bid at all, although he might have a very fine hand.

In order to provide for this contingency, any one having a hand which is strong enough to name the trump "out of hand," as it is called, and cards good enough to play against the partners without the assistance of the skat, can bid Solo.

An indifferent solo is often better than a risky tournee.

According to the official laws, the solo player cannot touch the Skat cards until the play is finished. The matadores then found may largely affect his score. In the modern game, he takes up the Skat cards, just as in a Gucki Grand, to be described later. This gives him an opportunity to lay away counting cards that are in danger, and also to count his sequence of matadores with certainty, before he names the trump. This method of play is called Gucki Solo.

These drawbacks naturally make Solo much more

difficult than Tournee, and demand much stronger hands. The compensation for the risks the solo player takes are accordingly greater, the unit values of the four suits being

♦ 9      ♥ 10      ♠ 11      ♣ 12

The matadores remain the same in rank and value and the games are calculated in the same way, a spade solo with 2, for instance, being worth 1 for game, "with" 2,  $= 3 \times 11 = 33$

### Announcing Schneider and Schwarz

The Solo introduces another element which is not possible in either the Simple or the Tournee, and that is the player's announcing in advance that he will hold his adversaries down to less than 30 points, making them schneider. He may even announce that they will not win a single trick, which will make them schwarz. The announcement must be made before a single card is played.

While the player in Simple or Tournee may accomplish either of these results, as we see he did in Illustrative Hand No. 2, when he made his opponents schneider, he is not allowed to announce it beforehand unless he plays the whole hand through without seeing or touching the skat cards. If he needs the assistance of the skat, either in determining the trump

or in allowing him to lay away, he cannot announce either schneider or schwarz.

To win a schneider, the adversaries must not get more than 29 points. If they get 30 they are "out of schneider." To win a schwarz, the losing side must not get a single trick. It does not matter whether there are any points in the trick or not; if they get one they save the schwarz. If it is the player that is made schwarz, he loses what he has in the skat.

Unless the Solo-player is very sure that he can accomplish what he announces, he is very foolish to make the promise, because, if he fails to do all that he announces, he loses what he might have made. If he announces schneider, he must make 91 points, or he loses the value of the game that he would have won had he succeeded; it is no use to make 61.

As a compensation for the risk that he takes upon himself in such announcements, he is allowed certain extra multipliers, which increase the value of his game if he wins it. They also increase the amount of his loss if he fails to do what he promises. The adversaries cannot announce anything.

The value of the various games, including the announced ones, run from 1 to 5, as follows:

For winning the game, 61 points . . . . .	1
For making schneider, without announcing it . .	2
For announcing schneider and making it . . .	3

---

For making schwarz, without announcing it . . .	3
For making schwarz, after announcing schneider	4
For announcing and making schwarz . . . .	5

These game values are added to the number of matadores, and the sum of the two is used as a multiplier. Suppose that the player says he will announce schneider in a club solo, and that he succeeds, holding three matadores. He counts his game thus: 3 for schneider announced, "with" 3,  $= 6 \times 12 = 72$  points.

The opportunity to announce schneider comes much more frequently than might be imagined, and it is often scored without having been announced. A good player will always go over in his mind the cards he must give to the adversaries, and will calculate just what points they can take home on those tricks. If he thinks these will not reach 30, he announces schneider.

Illustrative Hand No. 7 is a fair example of a perfectly safe schneider announced. The player knows that he cannot possibly lose more than one trick, because there are only eleven trumps in the pack, of which he holds eight, and he has the three best trumps with which to draw the three others. After the adverse trumps are drawn, he cannot lose his ace of diamonds.

The only risk he takes is, that all the hearts are in one hand, or that one player will discard all he has

on the trump leads. If his partner has the ace, and puts it on the 10, the one who has no hearts may be able to fatten the trick with an ace or a 10, either of which would put them out of schneider. The probability of such a thing is too remote to deter the player from announcing schneider, which will give him an extra multiplier. As it happens, the card he fears is in the skat, so that he makes "schwarz after announcing schneider," giving him still another multiplier.

With regard to the play of M in this hand, it should be observed that he puts the 10 on the first lead, on the chance that H has a J, because if he has not, the 10 is lost, no matter what M plays. On the second trick he gives up his jack, hoping to save his king if V should think it was in the skat. V goes right along with his winning cards, hoping that if one player should happen to hold both aces, he would not know which to keep at the end.

Occasionally, a player will meet with painful surprises in the outcome of his announced schneiders. Illustrative Hand No. 8 is an example of what sometimes happens. Unless there are five trumps against him in one hand, it looks as if the only trick the player could possibly lose was the Q of hearts, and even if one adversary can fatten it with an ace, 24 points is all the trick should carry with it.

Unfortunately for the player, M has none of the



## Illustrative Hand No. 7

CLUB SOLO, SCHNEIDER ANNOUNCED, BY VORHAND

<p>♣ J A Q 9 8 7          ♠ J          ♥ J 10          ♦ A</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>M</p> <p>V                  H</p> <p>D</p> </div>	<p>♣ —————          ♠ A 8 7          ♥ Q 9 7          ♦ K 9 8 7</p>
--	--	---

In skat; ♥ A, ♠ 9.

M bids 10 and then passes. H passes. V is the player. V plays Club solo, schneider announced.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♥ J	♣ 10	7 ♠	12	
2	J ♠	J ♦	7 ♦	4	
3	♣ J	♣ K	♥ 7	6	
4	♣ A	♥ 8	♥ 9	11	
5	♣ Q	♥ K	♥ Q	10	
6	♣ 9	Q ♠	8 ♠	3	
7	♣ 8	Q ♦	8 ♦	3	
8	♣ 7	10 ♦	9 ♦	10	
9	A ♦	K ♠	K ♦	19	
10	♥ 10	10 ♠	A ♠	31	

V gets 109 in play and 11 in skat, 120; winning schwarz. Clubs worth 12; 4 for schwarz after announcing schneider, "with" 3, =  $7 \times 12 = 84$  points.

suit first led, and hastens to save his high counting trump. Then he cautiously leads a K, not a 10, from his long suit, through the player. On this his partner, V, saves a counting trump and lets his partner ruff another diamond. M now has the best heart and leads it, giving V a chance to fatten with the 10 of spades, and that ends the slaughter.

In this case, it will be observed, the player loses only what he announced; that is, the adversaries do not get any more for having made him schneider than they would have for just getting out of schneider themselves. Had they made him schwarz, after he had announced schneider, they would have added another multiplier; just as they would if they made him schneider when he had not announced anything but the ordinary game.

Although the adversaries can never announce anything, they always add a multiplier if they make more than the player is nominally attempting to make, whether the game is Simple, Tournee or Solo. Suppose it is a heart solo, with 2. If the player wins it, he scores  $3 \times 10 = 30$ ; but if they make him schneider, he loses  $4 \times 10 = 40$ . If they make him schwarz, he loses  $5 \times 10 = 50$ .

If the adversaries do not make more than the player is nominally attempting to make, they cannot add any multipliers. If the player has not announced anything, it is assumed that he is playing for game only. His

## Illustrative Hand No. 8

CLUB SOLO, SCHNEIDER ANNOUNCED, BY HINTERHAND

<p>♣ 10 9 8</p> <p>♠ 10 Q</p> <p>♥ _____</p> <p>♦ K Q 9 8 7</p>	<p>♣ A Q</p> <p>♠ 9 8 7</p> <p>♥ 10 K 9 8 7</p> <p>♦ _____</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 150px; margin: 10px auto; position: relative;"><div style="position: absolute; top: 10%; left: 40%;">M</div><div style="position: absolute; top: 60%; left: 10%;">V</div><div style="position: absolute; top: 60%; right: 10%;">H</div><div style="position: absolute; bottom: 10%; left: 40%;">D</div></div>	<p>♣ J K 7</p> <p>♠ J</p> <p>♥ J A Q</p> <p>♦ J A 10</p>
---	---	--

In skat; ♠ A K.

M passes. H bids 10. V passes. H is the player.  
H plays Club solo, schneider announced.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	K ♦	♣ A	10 ♦		25
2	♣ 10	♥ K	♥ A		25
3	Q ♦	♣ Q	A ♦		17
4	10 ♠	♥ 10	♥ Q		23
5	7 ♦	♥ 9	J ♦	2	
6	♣ 8	♥ 7	♥ J	2	
7	♣ 9	♥ 8	J ♠	2	
8	8 ♦	7 ♠	♣ J	2	
9	9 ♦	8 ♠	♣ K	4	
10	Q ♠	9 ♠	♣ 7	3	

H gets 15 in play and 15 in skat. Instead of making the schneider he announced, he is himself made schneider. Clubs worth 12; schneider announced, 3 "with" 4, =  $7 \times 12 = 84$  points.

adversaries must make more than game to add a multiplier; that is, they must make schneider.

## Bidding

In bidding by suits, if a person wishes to go over a tournee he simply says "solo," which means that he will play a solo of some kind. If V says "Yes" to this, the bidder must go on and ask him, "Is it hearts?" for it must be as good as diamonds if it is a solo at all. It is not uncommon for a person to get the play in a spade solo with one when the bidder has a heart solo with six, schneider announced; but in suit bidding there is no provision for this possibility. That is why bidding by numbers is now insisted on, at least in all important games.

In bidding by numbers it is supposed that the unit values are such that any solo bid will be numerically better than any tournee bid. The lowest possible solo is diamonds, with or without 1, worth 18. It is extremely improbable that any player of good judgment could outbid this with a tournee, because he cannot go on to 20 unless he is risking a black turn-up "with" 3, and if the diamond solo is "with" 1, how can any other person be "with" 3? Both of them cannot have the best jack, and as already pointed out in dealing with Tournee bids, no good player would run up his bid when he was "without," because of

the danger of finding one of the higher jacks in the skat.

When Skat is played strictly according to the official laws, the solo player cannot touch the Skat cards, and is always in danger, when bidding "without," of finding better jacks in the Skat. The modern game, as mentioned on page 84, allows the solo player to take up the Skat cards before announcing his game, and thus leaves him free to call anything that he can make that will cover the amount bid, whether it be a solo or a grand.

Very few Skat-players, even those of considerable experience, have any definite idea of what constitutes a good solo hand. They may know one when they see it, but they do not know what it is that they see; that is to say, they cannot formulate any rule by which the beginner may be guided. Not a single writer on the game attempts to give any such rule, not even Herr Buhle, a defect which I shall attempt to remedy, because I think that if the conditions of the problem are examined separately, the difficulty will soon disappear, and from the principles disclosed, the rule will easily emerge.

## Position

A person's position at the table with regard to the lead has a great effect on the value of his game, especially in solos. We have already seen that the ad-

versaries always try to get the player between them, and when he is compelled to start in that position, as *Mittelhand*, he is at a disadvantage from the very first. For this reason, *M* is looked upon as the worst of all positions for any kind of game unless he has exceptionally strong cards.

*Vorhand* is the best position in a solo when his trumps are strong, because they can be led out immediately for the purpose of exhausting the adversaries. But with weak trumps, and especially with missing suits, which the player wants to ruff without fear of being over-trumped, *Hinterhand* is a very good position, especially as he can discard worthless cards if the trick is not worth trumping.

The beginner should impress this firmly on his memory: With strong trumps, which you want to lead at the first opportunity, it is better to be the leader, that is, *Vorhand*, than to trust to getting into the lead; but with weak trumps, some of which you want to ruff good counting cards with, without danger of being over-trumped, it is better to be the last player on the trick; that is, *Hinterhand*.

If the reader will turn back to *Illustrative Hand No. 8*, he will see that the disaster which overtook *H* would have been impossible had he been *V* instead, with those cards. In that hand *H* thought that if he did not obtain the lead on the first trick with an ace, he would trump himself in.

## The Eight Rule for Solos

After making due allowance for his position at the table, the novice will find it very useful to have some sort of mechanical guide which shall enable him to estimate the comparative value of a solo hand. If it fails to reach an easily ascertained standard, he can reject it, if it reaches or surpasses that standard, he can bid on it with safety.

After analyzing a vast number of solos, with a view to discovering some principle which should be common to all, so that by impressing this general principle upon the memory a person can dispense with a large number of rules and exceptions, I have found that those solos which almost invariably win will be found to stand the following simple test:

Count the number of cards in the suit you purpose making the trump, including the jacks, and add the number of aces and tens in plain suits that are probable trick winners, and if the total is eight or more, the hand will be a fair solo bid.

In counting tens, it must not be forgotten that if they are likely to be lost, they should not be included.

I have dealt out hands at random, and whenever I have come across one that came up to this standard, I have dealt the remaining twenty-two cards a dozen or more separate times and examined the result of a

solo. The result has more than confirmed my original opinion that the principle is sound.

If the reader will refer to the various Illustrative Hands which are solos, Nos. 7 to 12 inclusive, he will see how this rule may be applied. In No. 7, the player can count his hand up to 9; 8 trumps and 1 ace. In No. 8, the player had 6 trumps, and 3 aces and tens, which should have all been good for tricks; so that his hand was worth 9, and in Vorhand would have been invincible. In No. 9, the player cannot count up to 8, and he loses his game. In No. 10, the player knows that his solo is very weak, but he plays it in preference to a risky Tournee, trusting to a fortunate distribution of the cards and his own advantage as Vorhand to pull him through. In No. 11, the player can count his hand up to 8 with 6 trumps and 2 aces and tens. In No. 12, the player has 5 trumps and 3 aces and tens; a total of 8. This perfectly sound declaration is defeated only by the very fine play of an adversary.

The following are a few examples of good sound solo bids:

♣ J A Q 9 8 7

♠ J A 10

♥ K Q

♦ —————

Clubs. Counts 8.

Good in any position.

♣ —————

♠ 10 Q 9 8

♥ A 10 7

♦ J A 10

Spades. Counts 9.

Good Hinterhand.



♣ A  
 ♠ A 10  
 ♥ K Q 9 8 7  
 ♦ 10 K

Hearts Counts 9  
 Good in any position.

♣ J 10 K Q  
 ♠ A 10  
 ♥ —————  
 ♦ J Q 9 8

Diamonds Counts 8.  
 Better than clubs

The heart solo will be found particularly interesting if the remaining twenty-two cards are dealt at random, especially if the solo player is Vorhand. The diamond solo, it will be seen, will not count to 8 in any suit but diamonds.

Old skat-players are continually warning the novice against what they call "seven-trump solos." What they mean is, hands in which there are seven trumps and nothing else, that is, no tricks in plain suits, in other words, hands which will not count up to 8.

When a player, especially a beginner, finds seven trumps in his hand, the temptation to declare a solo is hard to resist, and occasionally these seven-trump hands go through, especially if the trumps themselves are particularly strong, or the partnership opposed to them is particularly weak.

Illustrative Hand No. 9 is a fair example of how these seven-trump hands go to pieces, especially when they start out by being in a bad position.

The play has several instructive points in it, some of which will be referred to again. When the player has not had an opportunity to lay away his dangerous

cards, there is not the same risk in leading good counting cards from long suits as there is in a Tournee, therefore V starts with the ace of his five-card suit. His partner playing the Q marks him with no more, as there are only seven hearts in play, so V goes on with the 10, hoping H can over-trump M. This compels M to ruff in with a valuable trump, so as to be sure of getting the lead.

The player then proceeds to pull down all the adverse trumps, in which he is quite successful; but in spite of this his side cards are not strong enough to win the game. Every one of his trumps takes a trick, yet he stops short at 60, missing his game by a nose.

After dropping the trumps, M leads the spade K as if he were trying to establish a trick in that suit, intending to discard the diamond if the spade is returned. But H has kept count, always an important thing to do, and he knows that unless his partner has the ace of diamonds, the game is lost. If the player has no diamond he can afford to discard a non-counting heart and still win the game; but if he has a diamond at all, it must be the K or Q, and if V has the ace of diamonds, the trick must be worth at least 24 points, which is just enough to defeat the player. This hand shows the importance of keeping an accurate mental count.

It is not to be expected that a player will never make a bid unless he has a perfectly safe game, but he

## Illustrative Hand No. 9

CLUB SOLO, BY MITTELHAND

<p>♣ A</p> <p>♠ Q</p> <p>♥ A10987</p> <p>♦ JAK</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>M</p> <p>V                  H</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> </div>	<p>♣ J K Q 9 7</p> <p>♠ J K</p> <p>♥ J K</p> <p>♦ Q</p> <p>♣ 10 8</p> <p>♠ A108</p> <p>♥ Q</p> <p>♦ 10987</p>
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In skat; ♠ 9 7.

M bids up to 36 before V passes. H passes. M is the player. M declares a club solo.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♥ A	♥ K	♥ Q		18
2	♥ 10	♥ J	7 ♦	12	
3	J ♦	J ♠	♣ 8	4	
4	♣ A	♣ J	♣ 10	23	
5	Q ♠	K ♠	A ♠		18
6	A ♦	Q ♦	10 ♦		24
7	K ♦	♣ 7	8 ♦	4	
8	♥ 7	♣ K	9 ♦	4	
9	♥ 8	♣ Q	8 ♠	3	
10	♥ 9	♣ 9	10 ♠	10	

M gets 60 in play, 0 in skat, losing his game. Clubs worth 12; 1 for game, "with" 3,  $= 4 \times 12 = 48$  points.

should at least have some reason to believe that the circumstances are favourable for a venture. The absence of any opposing bids, the dislike to wasting a good hand, or the hesitancy about risking a tournee with only two suits, any of these things may prompt a player to take a chance, and skat is full of rewards for the courageous player if he stops at the bounds of rashness. To play, one must bid, and old skat-players have a saying that the man who plays the most games will win the most points.

Illustrative Hand No. 10 is a good example of a doubtful solo which is better than a risky tournee, in a situation which indicates that there is no great strength opposed to the player, as no one bids anything.

With three jacks, not the best, the rule is to lead them until the best one falls. M does not put the best jack on the worst in the first trick, because he wants to get the player in the middle, if H has a jack. The second trick M must win, to save his partner's good counting cards, if he has any. Then he leads a singleton, still hoping his partner can get into the lead. Knowing that the 10 must be a singleton, because his partner would never lead it if it were guarded, and having neither K nor 7 himself, H puts on the ace. After drawing the trumps, the player's best chance is to get his spade tenace led up to. If he can coax the ace of diamonds on the 7, he may make the adversaries schneider. V must trump the

# Illustrative Hand No. 10

HEART SOLO, BY VORHAND

♣	_____		♣ J 10	
♠	J A K		♠ Q 9 8 7	
♥	J 10 K Q		♥ 8 7	
♦	J 10 7		♦ A Q	
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> M  V                  H    D </div>		
			♣ A Q 9 8	
			♠ 10	
			♥ A 9	
			♦ K 9 8	

In skat; ♣ K 7.

M and H both pass. V is the player. V declares heart solo, which is better than a risky tournee.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	<u>J ♦</u>	♥ 7	♥ 9	2	
2	♥ J	♣ J	♥ A		15
3	<u>♥ 10</u>	♣ 10	♣ A	31	
4	<u>J ♠</u>	♥ 8	♣ 8	2	
5	7 ♦	Q ♦	<u>K ♦</u>		7
6	<u>♥ Q</u>	7 ♠	♣ Q	6	
7	10 ♦	<u>A ♦</u>	8 ♦		21
8	<u>A ♠</u>	8 ♠	10 ♠	21	
9	<u>K ♠</u>	9 ♠	9 ♦	4	
10	<u>♥ K</u>	Q ♠	♣ 9	7	

V gets 73 in play and 4 in skat, 77; winning his game. Hearts worth 10; 1 for game, "without" 1, - 2×10=20 points.

third lead of clubs to prevent M from fattening the trick.

### Choice of Games

It often happens that the player has a choice of suits in which to declare solo. In Illustrative Hand No. 8, for instance, he might have named any one of three suits, and still have had six trumps, headed by four jacks. The reason he selects the club is because it is the only suit in which he can announce schneider, and is therefore the most valuable game; schneider announced 3, "with" 4,  $= 7 \times 12 = 84$ . If he names diamonds, he is 1 for game, "with" 6,  $= 7 \times 9 = 63$  only. In hearts, 1 for game, "with" 5  $= 6 \times 10 = 60$  only. As we shall see presently when we come to Grand, the unit of which is 16, his game in that would have been worth 80 only. In Illustrative Hand No. 7, on the contrary, there is only one possible declaration, clubs.

It is not often that a solo player can choose between more than two suits, however, and the following rules will be found useful in guiding him to a judicious selection:

1. Between two games, choose the safer.
2. Between two equally safe, choose the more expensive.
3. Between two equally risky, choose the cheaper.
4. Between two equally long suits, select the weaker.

One or two hands from actual play will probably show the application of these rules better than anything else.

Take the following cards in Vorhand:

♣ J A 10 Q  
♠ A K 9 8  
♥ J  
♦ J

While the club looks tempting, it is not as safe as the spade, because with clubs for trumps it is possible to lose two tricks in trumps and two in spades, and the game is not by any means an absolute certainty. If spades are declared and the jacks are led right out, one trump is all that is possible for the adversaries to win, unless one of them has three clubs to the K. While it is improbable that the club solo would be lost, it is possible, and surprises are common in skat; but it is impossible to lose the spade solo. Many players would even risk announcing schneider on the double chance that either the trumps are not all in one hand; or that the club Q wins a trick.

Take the following cards in Vorhand:

♣ J  
♠ J A 10 9  
♥ J 8  
♦ A 10 7

Both solos are equally safe, so that the more expensive spade should be selected.

Take the following cards in Hinterhand:

♣ A 10 8 7  
 ♦ A  
 ♥ J  
 ◇ A 10 9 8

The player cannot risk a tournee with only two suits and one jack, and one solo is about as safe as the other. Although he will have five trumps in either suit, and hopes to ruff hearts with the ace or 10, the solo is not particularly strong with six trumps out against it and the plain suit so long that it is liable to be trumped. Between two equally risky games, it is better to choose the cheaper, and declare diamonds.

Take the following cards in Hinterhand:

♣ J A 10 K 9  
 ♦ J A 9 8 7  
 ♥ ———  
 ◇ ———

The clubs are the more valuable suit to declare, but the spades are worthless unless they can be established in one lead. Every card in the club suit will be good for a trick as soon as the adverse trumps are forced out. With such hands, one should always make the weaker suit the trump, especially with the two best jacks, because even if there are five trumps in one hand against you, it is practically impossible to lose the game if the weaker suit is declared.

Illustrative Hand No. 11 is a very good example of



## CLUB SOLO, BY MITTELHAND

In skat; ♦ Q 8.

V passes when M bids 33. H passes. M is the player. M declares a club solo.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♥ A	<u>♣ Q</u>	♥ 9	14	21
2	J ♦	<u>J ♠</u>	♣ K	8	
3	♥ J	<u>♣ J</u>	7 ♠	4	
4	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 7	♥ 10		
5	♥ K	<u>♣ 8</u>	9 ♠	4	
6	8 ♠	<u>A ♠</u>	7 ♦	11	20
7	<u>♣ 10</u>	10 ♠	9 ♦		
8	♥ Q	<u>♣ 9</u>	K ♦	7	
9	♥ 7	<u>K ♠</u>	10 ♦	14	
10	♥ 8	<u>Q ♠</u>	A ♦	14	

M gets 76 in play, and 3 in skat, 79; winning his game. Clubs worth 12; 1 for game, "with" 2, =  $3 \times 12 = 36$  points.

selecting the weaker of two suits for the trump. In spite of the best defence the adversaries can make, the player wins his game easily.

The player not having laid away any cards in the skat, V leads the ace of his long suit, and M trumps with a counting card. With the two best jacks and neither ace nor ten of trumps in his hand, the player must lead the jacks. It is useless for the player to lead his long spade suit while there are any trumps out against him; but unless he leads trumps he cannot tell that one or both of the outstanding trumps are not in the skat.

At trick 5, observe that V does not lead his last trump, although it is the best, but goes on with the established heart suit, because if M does not trump it, H will fatten. If either the 8 or 9 of trumps is in the skat, the player must lose his game. M leads his high counting spades, so as to force V to trump before his partner gets courage enough to fatten, if V has a trump, which neither M nor H can tell from the play.

### Leading

The most important thing for the player in a Solo is to lead trumps at every opportunity, unless he finds that all the trumps are against him in one hand. Under those circumstances he should avoid wasting his strength, making his winning cards instead, and leaving the trump lead to the adversary.

Experience has shown that with certain combinations of jacks, it is best to lead them in a certain way, partly because there is an advantage in the leads themselves, and partly because some jack leads invite the adversaries to err.

### Leading Jacks

With all four jacks, it is best to begin with the lowest, or to lead the club and follow it with the heart or diamond, as if the leader did not hold the spade jack. The object of this lead is to coax the second player to fatten the trick for his partner by throwing in a high counting card in a plain suit, if he has no trumps after the first trick. As it is more likely that a player will be able to follow suit at least once, the club jack followed by the heart is the better lead, because if the diamond jack wins, it will be obvious to the second hand that his partner has no jacks. Nothing is gained by coaxing the second hand to throw in a high counting trump early, as it can be caught in any case in four leads.

With the three best jacks, follow the same plan, either beginning with the heart jack, or leading the club and then the heart, as if the spade jack were against you.

With three jacks, not the best, lead them until the best jack is forced out.

With two jacks, the manner of leading them de-

depends on which they are, and also somewhat on the value of the other trumps. The skat-player should practise these various leads with a pack of cards until he is quite sure that he knows each variation, because on the proper management of two jacks many a solo depends.

With the club and spade, lead the spade first.

With the spade and diamond, lead the diamond first. That is the best chance to establish the spade jack.

With the spade and heart lead the spade jack, to prevent the second hand from fattening, because he will probably think you hold the club jack also.

With the heart and diamond, lead one of them only when you hold both ace and ten of trumps.

With two jacks which are not the best and the A 10 of trumps only, do not lead trumps at all, but play your winning cards in other suits. This rule applies more often to tournees than to solos.

With only one jack, and the A 10 and a number of small trumps, lead the small trumps first, as there are no high counting trumps in the hands of the adversaries that they can get home.

This is a very important rule, and many beginners lose valuable points by neglecting it and leading out the jack, under the mistaken idea that they will get all the jacks out of their way, forgetting that the jack they sacrifice is worth 2 points. Skat is too delicate a game to waste anything in this way.

Illustrative Hand No. 12 is a good example of leading trumps small when the player holds only one jack with the A and 10.

Upon getting into the lead, H selects his longest suit, which has the additional advantage that it contains neither ace nor ten. If the player holds both those cards, no harm is done and the partner may ruff. If the player has the ace, the partner's ten is freed, if it is guarded; if it is not guarded it will be caught in any case.

V, on getting in, leads another small trump, hoping to find each player able to follow suit. On this trick H avails himself of the opportunity to fatten with his singly-guarded 10 of hearts. This shows M that it is useless to hold the tenace in hearts, A K, so M leads hearts. After that, M leads a low club, knowing that his partner has not the 10, or has it well guarded.

At trick 8, V leads the 10 of trumps, to tempt M to win it. If M has only one jack, and the other is in the skat, V loses nothing, no matter what he leads; but if M has two jacks and a small trump, he would play the small trump on the spade J, which is worth only 2 points, so as to be sure of winning the last two tricks.

M has kept mental count, however, and he knows that this 10 will not be enough for him unless his partner can give him a 10, which is very unlikely, or he would have done it on the second heart lead. As

M has all the K's himself, the most his partner can have is a Q, and that is not enough, because the solo player must be all trumps unless he has the 10 of spades. By passing this 10 of trumps, M gets home just enough to reach 60, defeating a very strong diamond solo, well played.

### The Adversaries' Play

In playing against a solo, the adversaries must never forget that there is a better chance to make their aces than there would be in a tournee, because the player has had no chance to lay away a suit in the skat. Not only will the player often be compelled to follow suit with one or two small cards, but he will sometimes be caught with unguarded tens.

As a rule, the adversaries should make their aces and change suits frequently, so as to prevent the player from discarding. It is very important to keep the player from getting rid of his losing cards cheaply by discarding them on tricks that are not worth trumping. To prevent this, one adversary will often put an ace or a ten on a trick which he knows the player can trump, just to make him trump instead of discarding.

As in all games, the partners should try to get the player between them. When the partner on the right of the player has a long suit, especially one which the player has already trumped, he should try to get the

## Illustrative Hand No. 12

DIAMOND SOLO, BY VORHAND

<p>♣ A 10          ♠ J A          ♥ 8 7          ♦ A 10 9 8</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <p>M</p> <p>V                      H</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> </div>	<p>♣ Q 9 8          ♠ Q 9 8 7          ♥ J 10 Q          ♦ _____</p>
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In skat; ♠ 10, ♥ 9.

M bids 10 and then passes. H passes. V is the player. V declares Diamond solo.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	8 ♦	K ♦	♥ J		6
2	<u>A ♠</u>	K ♠	9 ♠	15	
3	9 ♦	<u>Q ♦</u>	♥ 10		13
4	♥ 7	<u>♥ A</u>	♥ Q		14
5	♥ 8	<u>♥ K</u>	♣ Q		7
6	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 7	♣ 9	11	
7	<u>♣ 10</u>	♣ K	♣ 8	14	
8	<u>10 ♦</u>	7 ♦	7 ♠	10	
9	J ♠	<u>♣ J</u>	8 ♠		4
10	A ♦	<u>J ♦</u>	Q ♠		16

V gets 50 in play and 10 in skat, 60; losing his game. Diamonds worth 9; 1 for game, "without" 1,  $-2 \times 9 = 18$  points.

lead, so as to continue that suit, if possible, and his partner should allow him every opportunity to get into the lead.

If the suit is headed by the ace, always lead the ace first. In *tournee*, it is not safe to begin with high counting cards of long suit, because the player has almost certainly laid that suit away; but in solo, if you do not lead your aces, the player may get rid of the suit very cheaply. Illustrative Hand No. 9 shows the advantage of this opening.

Suits headed by A 10 are always good leads against a solo player, even if it is certain that the second round will be trumped, because it is better to lead the high counting card and force the trump, than to lead a small one and let the player discard.

From suits headed by 10 K and others, the K is the best opening, because it will either win the trick or force out the ace and establish the ten.

When an adversary has no long suit headed by A 10 or by 10 K, it is safer to lead a suit in which he has neither A nor 10; for the reasons explained in the notes to Illustrative Hand No. 12. If the player has the 10 insufficiently guarded, it is often caught by this lead, when the partner has the ace.

Toward the end of the hand, it is often advantageous to make the player lead, especially if it is suspected that he holds a weakly guarded 10, or that he is likely to ruff with a high counting trump. In case



of doubt, a trump lead is the safest, forcing the player into the lead, as in Illustrative Hand No. 4, or else a valuable card which he cannot afford to pass if he has none of the suit.

If your partner discards on a trick which he knows you will win, or which is already yours, instead of fattening it, it is usually an indication that he wants to ruff the suit he discards, or at least that he would like you to lead it. If you see him throw a small trump on a trick which has already been trumped by the player, you may be sure that he has no more trumps, and is getting ready to fatten the trick for you if trumps are led again.

A very important rule for the partners in playing against solos is to give up their highest cards on their partner's tricks, and their lowest cards on the player's.

If you lead an ace, for instance, and your partner plays the 7, it should be a certainty that he has no more of that suit; because with any other with the 7, even the 8 or 9, he should play the higher first.

If it is the player's trick, however, to which your partner plays a Q, it should be certain that no smaller card of that suit is in his hand; therefore the 7 8 9 are in the hand of the player or in the skat.

Tenaces are more valuable in the hands of partners opposed to a solo than against a tournee, and when they are held, and it is probable or evident that the player still has cards of that suit, the tenace should

be held over him until he is either compelled to lead into it or unguard his own hand. Illustrative Hand No 5 is a good example of such a position, H keeping the tenace in hearts over M. In Illustrative Hand No 10, M holds up his ace of diamonds, finessing the Q, because he knows his partner must have the K, if not the 10, so that they hold a tenace between them. If the player had both 10 and K, he would lead the K to clear the suit.

### Second Hand Play

It is usually good play to put J on J if the player leads any J which is not the club J, but it is not necessary to put the best J on the worst, because the partner may be able to win the diamond J and get the player in the middle. If the partner cannot win the first lead, the best J must be put on the second round of trumps or the partner's high counting trumps, if he has any, may be lost. This situation arises in Illustrative Hand No 10.

When the second hand holds a J which is just one better than the one led by the player, he should cover, putting the spade on the heart, for instance, so that his partner may give him a counting trump which might otherwise be in danger.

When the second hand holds only the A 10 of trumps, with the spade J, it is better to give up the

ace of trumps on the first trick, so as to be sure of winning the second with the jack. But if the jack held by second hand is a red one, and the club jack is led, he should not be in too great a hurry to give up the counting trump, but should play the J, because his partner may win the second round of trumps with the spade jack, as it is unusual to lead the club J when the player holds both the black jacks in his own hand.

Under the same circumstances, if the lead is the spade J, it is better to give up the counting trump at once, and keep the red jack, because unless your partner has the club jack, your high trump is gone, no matter what you do.

If the player leads a suit, second hand should not be in too great a hurry to put on the ace, unless he has the 10 also, but should give his partner a chance to get into the lead, putting the player in the middle, at the same time holding over him the ace of the suit which he seems to be trying to clear.

If it is the partner that leads, and the second hand has the ace, he should put it on at once, no matter what he holds, not only so as to get the player in the middle, but to take the only chance there is of catching him with an unguarded ten. Second hand should not put on a 10, unless his partner leads the ace, or that card has been played. Even when the ace is led by the partner, it is not always wise to give up the

10 if the player follows suit, because it may clear his K. It is not likely that the partner would lead the suit if he had the tenace in it, A K, unless the situation demanded it. If the leader is evidently anxious to make his ace, his partner may as well save his ten at the same time, especially if it saves a possible schneider or wins the game.

When the second hand holds the 10 Q of a suit, and the K is led through him, even by his partner, he should put on the 10, so as to establish the Q. If it is the player who leads, both K and A may win tricks. If it is the partner, the player would probably pass the K, and wait for your 10, and your partner would not get a chance to fatten on your established Q.

When the partner leads small cards and second hand does not hold the ace, he should cover the trick with the K if he holds it, or with the Q if he has both K and Q. This will get the player in the middle if he refuses to win the trick, and it will also avoid the danger of the player's winning the first trick too cheaply and still holding the ace of it. If second hand can cover with a non-counting card, and still be sure that the player will not be able to win the trick cheaply, he should do so. An example of this occurs in Illustrative Hand No. 1, when M leads the club.

If the player leads a small card and second hand puts on the 10, his partner should not be too anxious to win this 10 with the ace unless he holds the K also,

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or is particularly anxious to get the lead or save the 21 points

### Fattening

In a solo, an adversary should not fatten with an ace unless he has also the 10 of the same suit, or unless he sees that the player has no more, or the suit is so long that it cannot go round more than once, or when the 11 points save a possible schneider or win the game

It is important to seize the first opportunity to fatten the partner's tricks with unguarded tens, and with any counting cards of suits which the player has either discarded or trumped

It is always better to get rid of a suit than to fatten with cards which are not in any apparent danger. The advantage of getting rid of one worthless little trump, so as to be ready to fatten the next trump trick, has already been pointed out. This should be done only when it is probable or obvious that the partner can win a trump trick, of course

If the second hand has no trumps, he should be careful not to fatten with valuable cards when the player leads a red jack through him. The jack may be a feint, or if it is not, the value of the trick may compel the partner to give up one of the black jacks to win the trick, when it might have been much more to his advantage to let the player lead again. If the second hand's high cards are trumps, and they are unguarded,

he may as well take the chance that his partner can win the first round when a red jack is led, because if the player is long in trumps, the partner may not be able to hold up.

## Trumping

The adversaries cannot be too quick about trumping in with an unguarded ace or ten. Illustrative Hand No. 7 is a good example of this, and its effectiveness.

When it is doubtful whether the player or your partner will win a trick, trump it only when it puts the player in the middle for the next trick.

Partners should not deceive each other by trumping with an unnecessarily high card which is not of greater value than another. With two jacks, for instance, trump with the lower, because to trump with the higher denies the other.

The partners should not allow themselves to be overtrumped too cheaply. "Do not send a boy to the mill," is an old maxim in card games. If the partner leads a suit of which second hand has none, and he thinks the player will trump it, he should put on the club J if he has it, especially if the trick saves or wins the game. It at least has the advantage of getting the player in the middle. H does this at the sixth trick in Illustrative Hand No. 6.

If you have reason to think that the player can follow suit, while you can trump, trump with the best

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counting trump you have, especially if it is in danger. The player himself always saves his counting trumps in preference to ruffing with the small ones. An example of this will be found in the first trick of Illustrative Hand No. 11.

When an adversary is strong in trumps, he should not be too anxious to over-trump or to win trump tricks with nothing in them, or with not enough in them to do him any good. The play of M in Illustrative Hand No. 12 at the eighth trick is a case in point.

## GRAND SOLO

### Jacks the Only Trumps

WHEN the player has one particularly long suit, say six or seven cards, his natural wish is to make that the trump, because the smallest trump will win the highest counting card in a plain suit. Having none of a suit, he knows that if the adversaries lead it he can ruff it.

This is distinctly unpleasant for the adversaries, who may find themselves with several aces and tens, none of which is good for a trick, because the player will trump them. If the reader will look over the Illustrative Hands already given, especially the solos, it will be seen that the partners usually lose about three aces and tens on each deal. If there were any way of cutting down the supply of trumps, most of those cards might have been saved.

If it is the player that has these high cards, he is naturally anxious to save them, and he does so by exhausting the adversaries' trumps as rapidly as possible. If he has not trumps enough to accomplish this, he usually comes to grief. When he has high cards in several suits, but no long suit, it is simply guesswork to select one of those suits for the trump; because an



unfortunate distribution of the cards may easily lose him his game. A player must never forget that when he names any suit for the trump, he turns more than a third of the whole pack into trumps.

Let us take, for example, some such selection of cards as the following in Vorhand:

♣ J A 7  
♠ J 8 7  
♥ A 10  
♦ A 10

Although this is a pretty strong hand, it is easily conceivable that the game might be lost, no matter what suit was picked out for the trump, because there must be seven trumps out against the player.

\* What a player would like to do, when he has good cards like these, but not enough of one suit to make it the trump, would be to limit the number of trumps in the hands of the adversaries, or to play the hand practically without any trumps.

This he can do by declaring a Grand, which means that the four jacks shall be the only trumps, and that there shall be four plain suits of seven cards each.

If we make jacks the only trumps in such a hand as the example just given, with the advantage of the lead, it is obviously impossible for Vorhand to lose his game. Nothing can stop him from reaching 61 before he loses a trick.

Holding the two best jacks himself, he can catch

all the other trumps in the pack in two leads, after which all his aces and tens are sure winners. He already has 57 points in his own cards, and if he gets nothing from his adversaries but the two jacks, that will make him 61. If they have not the jacks, they must be in the skat, where they equally count for the player, so that he gets to 61 no matter where the remaining jacks are.

It is not often that a player holds cards strong enough for a Grand; but he is frequently tempted to risk one when he has a better solo. On the other hand, a player will sometimes declare solo on cards which are perfectly safe for a grand.

It is important that the novice should clearly distinguish among the various classes of hands or games.

With two jacks, and moderate strength scattered among three or four suits, it is a *tournee*; but with great strength in two or three suits, still with the two jacks, it is a *grand*. With all the strength massed in one suit, it is usually a solo.

The unit value of Grand is 16 points.

It is impossible to have more than four *matadores* in Grand, because there are only four trumps in the pack; but as the game is played without touching the skat cards, the player may add to his multipliers by announcing *schneider* or *schwarz*, just as in solo. The greater number of possible *matadores*, and therefore multipliers, in solo, is often overlooked by beginners,

who do not stop to consider the comparative value of the two games, solo and grand, when either is possible.

Take the following cards in Vorhand:

♣ J 10 Q 9 7  
♠ J  
♥ J  
♦ A 10 K

With these cards, it is quite true that two tricks in clubs are all that it is possible to lose, and that a grand cannot be lost. But a grand, with 3, is worth only  $4 \times 16 = 64$  points; whereas, if the player calls a solo in clubs, he can announce schneider with absolute certainty, and then he will have 2 more multipliers than he could get in grand, his game being worth  $6 \times 12 = 72$ .

Many persons are carried away with the idea that jacks make a grand; but such is not the case. Take the following cards in Vorhand:

♣ J  
♠ J 9 8 7  
♥ J A 10  
♦ J 9

This is not by any means a safe grand, as we shall see when we come to the rules for bidding, because if one adversary happens to have all the spades, his partner can fatten every trick, and the adversaries can easily reach 71. But play these cards as a spade solo,

schneider announced, and the hand is absolutely invincible, making it worth  $7 \times 11 = 77$  points. There are only four trumps against the player, and the four jacks must draw them all, so that the only trick it is possible to lose in a solo is the diamond.

To declare a heart solo on these cards, just for the sake of the six matadores, is to invite defeat. If a seven-trump hand, with no outside tricks in it is weak, what about a six-trump hand with nothing else in it but 7's 8's and 9's?

### Position

The position of the player is a most important consideration in Grand, more so than in any other game, because of the danger of being forced to trump when there are so few trumps in play.

Vorhand has an immense advantage in playing grand, because of his control of the trump situation, and that is the position in which grand is most commonly attempted. The difference which the player's position may make can best be illustrated by a concrete example. Let us take the following cards:

♣ J 7  
♠ J 7  
♥ A 10 8  
♦ A 10 K

If these cards are in Vorhand, he has an invincible grand, because all he has to do is to lead out his jacks

and then make the five tricks in the red suits. It is impossible for him to lose more than three tricks, and when the time comes for him to lose them it will be found that there are not counting cards enough left in the pack for the adversaries to pile on these three tricks to net them 60 points; as will be evident if the experiment be tried with a pack of cards.

But now let us give these same cards to Mittelhand, and let V lead a black suit. M must trump the second round, and if he finds the two red jacks in one hand against him, he may lose his game very easily. Put the same cards in Hinterhand, and the same danger arises, and from the same cause: the player cannot get out the trumps.

Let us take another example, giving the player the red jacks, so that he cannot lead them for the purpose of catching the other jacks:

♣ A 10 K  
 ♠ —————  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ J A 10 K 8 7

Give these cards to Vorhand, and it is an invincible grand. Instead of leading the jacks, on the chance of bringing down the other two together, he begins with his long diamond suit and keeps it up until one of the black jacks trumps it. No matter what is led next, he gets in and forces out the other jack. The adversaries cannot pile enough counting cards on those

two tricks to take them to 60, even if they ruff both the player's aces.

But put these cards in Mittelhand or Hinterhand, and it would be folly to declare grand on them. In either of those positions the player would be compelled to play a diamond solo without 2, worth 27 points, instead of the 48 that a grand would bring him.

### Bidding

As a rule, it is easier to win a poor solo than a doubtful grand; but occasionally a person will be forced up to a grand by the bidding of another player. The number of points that any one can afford to bid on a grand are reckoned up in precisely the same manner as for a solo, and the same danger exists in bidding "without" when the number of matadores is part of the figure which is offered for the play. When a player has the matadores in his hand, he can count upon them as certain multipliers; but when he is "without," he would be prudent to stop at 32.

The principal cards in grand are aces and tens, and when you have any seven of them, you have a fairly safe bid. This would include all such hands as four aces and three tens; or four tens and three aces; but any grand without jacks is dangerous, especially if there is a strong solo bid against it.

With two jacks, no matter which ones, V can

play grand with only two suits; but either M or H must have three suits to play with only two jacks. When we come to Illustrative Hand No. 16 we shall see the disastrous consequences of violating this rule. With only one jack, any player must have four suits.

V can play grand with the two best jacks and five certain tricks, provided the tricks are in two different suits. He can win a grand with the two best jacks and four tricks, provided these four are aces and tens, and there is not more than one Q in the tricks he must lose.

A safe and simple rule for the novice to follow is to add the number of sure tricks to the number of winning jacks, and if the total equals seven, it is a safe grand, provided the three losing cards are not worth anything.

It is essential that the power of a seven-trick hand should be thoroughly understood, and that the importance of the three losing cards being worthless should be impressed on the memory, because with this standard to guide one, it is not a very difficult matter to decide upon the merits of a proposed grand. An illustration will probably make the point clearer. Let us take these cards:

♣ J 7  
♠ J 7  
♥ A 10 K Q  
♦ A 7

Now take the rest of the pack and sort out all the most valuable counting cards in it and pile them on the three 7's, which the player must lose after he has made his seven tricks. You will find that three tens, two aces and a king are the best you can do, 56 points only.

But observe that if two of the losing cards in this example hand are not 7's, but Q's or K's, it is possible, although highly improbable, for the grand to be lost, because the tricks won by the adversaries are made just so much more valuable by the addition of these Q's and K's that they can get together 62 points. If only one Q had to be given up, it would not matter, as they would still stop at 59, but a K might be fatal.

In order to illustrate the importance of the rule that the tricks in a grand must be in two different suits if the player has only two jacks, unless they are the two best jacks, let us change the last example a little by adding the 9 of hearts and taking away the ace of diamonds. It is now possible for the adversaries to get 63 points by piling the aces and tens of three suits on the player's three 7's.

Whether the three losing cards in a grand are in the same suit or in different suits, does not matter, because if the player must lead both his jacks to catch the other jacks, he is out of the game after he has made his five tricks in suit, and the adversaries take the rest of the tricks, no matter what the player's small cards are.



Even if the player has three jacks, he must still have seven sure tricks, that is, four in addition to his jacks, if the jacks are the best, five, if the best is against him. These tricks should still be in two suits. If the example given is still further changed, putting the jack of hearts in place of the Q, but still leaving out the ace of diamonds, the hand is still an invincible grand. Change it still further by replacing the K of hearts with the J of diamonds, and it is still invincible.

Although not absolutely certain, it is pretty safe to play a grand with three jacks and an established suit of four cards, provided the three remaining cards are worthless. With only three cards of an established suit, and the four jacks, the game may be won, but it is a risk.

Illustrative Hand No. 13 is an example of such a game. V has four jacks and three cards of an established suit, and does not care to risk a club solo even with seven matadores, because it is possible for the adversaries to get 63 points on his small cards. He might play a heart solo, but he could lose that in the same way if all the trumps were in one hand. If the cards are so disposed that they could beat him on a grand, they could probably beat him on a solo, so it is a case of choosing the cheaper of two games, both risky. As it happens, this is one of the seven-trump hands that would have gone through.

It is a nice question as to how much the adver-

saries can be misled by the manner of leading jacks. They always suspect the player to have four when he plays a grand and leads the diamond jack first. They also know that the spade jack is often led to prevent the second hand from fattening, and many good players assume that it is best to fatten in just that case. In this hand, M knows that it is more important to get rid of a suit than to fatten, so he discards a heart. Had he fattened the first trick, he would not only have given V the game, but he would have been unable to fatten his partner's tricks later on. After leading out all his clubs, V can either try to force discards with the jacks, or he can lead the singleton diamond, hoping to discard on the second round of that suit, or to ruff a spade. It is always advisable, when still able to trump, to get rid of a suit in this manner, because then you can either trump or discard.

It is very unfortunate for the player that the lead goes to H, because if M had held the ace of diamonds, he could not have led the hearts, and V would have been able to ruff a spade worth something, or to discard a heart, winning his game.

It is not to be supposed that players wait for certainties before bidding on grands, but at the same time a grand is an expensive affair if it goes against the player, and he should be pretty sure. If the rule is fixed in the memory that with seven sure tricks in two suits, no matter what these tricks are, you have

# Illustrative Hand No. 13

SOLO GRAND, BY VORHAND

	♣ 8 7			
	♠ A 10 K 8			
	♥ 9			
	♦ 10 K Q			
♣ J A 10 K		M		♣ Q 9
♠ J		V	H	♠ Q 9 7
♥ J 8 7				♥ A 10 K Q
♦ J 7		D		♦ A

In skat; ♦ 9 8.

M and H both pass. V is the player. V announces grand solo.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	<u>J ♠</u>	♥ 9	7 ♠	2	
2	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 7	♣ 9	11	
3	<u>♣ 10</u>	♣ 8	♣ Q	13	
4	<u>♣ K</u>	8 ♠	9 ♠	4	
5	7 ♦	10 ♦	<u>A ♦</u>		21
6	♥ 7	A ♠	<u>♥ A</u>		22
7	♥ 8	10 ♠	<u>♥ 10</u>		20
8	<u>J ♦</u>	Q ♦	♥ K	9	
9	<u>♣ J</u>	K ♦	Q ♠	9	
10	<u>♥ J</u>	K ♠	♥ Q	9	

V gets 57 in play, 0 in skat, losing his game. Grand worth 16; 1 for game, "with" 4, =  $5 \times 16 - 80$  points.

an invincible grand if you have the two best jacks among your tricks, and the lead, provided your three losing cards are not worth more than a Q, by making allowance for the weakness of other positions, and taking into consideration that you may have to trump yourself into the lead, it will not be difficult to estimate the cards necessary for a grand, no matter where the player may sit.

The chief point is for the player to understand the risks he is taking when he declares a grand that is not safe. If there is no strong bidding against him, and especially if he is Vorhand, he may try a grand with only five or six tricks in his hand, and without even the best jacks. Experience will soon teach the player how widely he may depart from the path of safety upon occasion.

Illustrative Hand No. 14 is an example of playing a grand with only five tricks, and not all of them sure. The advantage lies in the position.

In the first place, V can lead the best jack and see if both the others fall. If they do not, he still has the chance that the other may be in the skat. In case it should be out against him, however, the player must be very careful to force it out, and not to allow the adversary that holds it to get into the lead on a plain suit and catch the heart jack.

After getting rid of his singleton, so as to be ready to fatten if the opportunity offers, M gets rid of his

# Illustrative Hand No. 14

SOLO GRAND, BY VORHAND

	♣ K 8 7	
	♠ 9	
	♥ 9 8 7	
	♦ A Q 9	
♣ J A 10	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> M  V                  H    D </div>	♣ 9
♠ A 10 Q 8		♠ J K 7
♥ J 10 Q		♥ A K
♦ ———		♦ J 10 K 7

In skat; ♣ Q, ♦ 8.

M passes. H bids 10 and then passes. V is the player. V announces grand.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♣ J	9 ♠	J ♦	4	
2	<u>A ♠</u>	♥ 7	7 ♠	11	
3	<u>10 ♠</u>	♥ 8	K ♠	14	
4	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 7	♣ 9	11	
5	♣ 10	♣ 8	<u>J ♠</u>		12
6	♥ Q	<u>A ♦</u>	K ♦		18
7	♥ 10	Q ♦	<u>10 ♦</u>		23
8	<u>♥ J</u>	9 ♦	7 ♦	2	
9	<u>Q ♠</u>	♥ 9	♥ K	7	
10	<u>8 ♠</u>	♣ K	♥ A	15	

V gets 64 in play, and 3 in skat, winning his game. Grand worth 16; 1 for game, "with"  $1 = 2 \times 16 = 32$  points.

hearts, keeping his twice guarded K of clubs. At the fourth trick V must shift to clubs, or H will get rid of any worthless clubs he may hold, instead of trumping. If H refuses to trump the 10 of clubs, M will think he has no trump, and V will take advantage of this and return to the established spades, on which M will be afraid to fatten. When H leads the K of diamonds, it is better to discard the Q of hearts than to trump it, because two heart tricks must then be lost, unless the ace of hearts is single. There is no use trumping the seventh trick, because the adversaries are already out of schneider, and they cannot win another trick after the 10 of hearts is discarded.

### Leading

In Grand, the important matter is to drop the adverse jacks, if there are any, as quickly as possible, so that the player shall have no fear of losing the good cards upon which he has bid his grand.

If the player holds all four jacks himself, especially with a weak suit in his hand, he should begin with the spade, which is more likely to deceive the second hand than the conventional diamond.

With three jacks, not the best, it is safest to have the best out of the way at once. If it is in third hand, the second hand may be prevented from fattening if the jack is led at once.

With two jacks, the club and a red one, lead the club, on the chance that both the others will fall. If they do not, force out the other one, by leading cards which are worth trumping, and lead them before the other adversary gets rid of the suit, or he will fatten.

With both the red jacks, do not lead either, unless you have three suits, and can afford to take the chance of knocking the black jacks together. With two suits only, force.

With only one jack and all four suits, lead the jack, no matter what one it is. That is the best chance to knock three jacks together on one trick.

With no jacks, begin by leading the aces of the suits in which you have the tens also, but do not lead the tens until you have led all the aces. This leaves you still the command of all the suits, in case one of your high cards is trumped.

When the player sees that he must lose a trick in a certain suit in which he can win some tricks himself, it is better to lose the trick early, while both adversaries have the suit, because if the player waits until one adversary has discarded the suit, or leads his own winning cards first and is then compelled to lead losing cards, the partner of the one that wins these later tricks will fatten. If this plan of leading the losing cards first does not succeed, no method of play would.

Illustrative Hand No. 15 is an example of managing a suit in this way. M has three jacks and three

suits, and can stand a force. The only tricks he should lose are the two small diamonds.

V opens with the top of his long suit. There is only one other, the ace, and he takes the chance that if the player has it, his partner can trump. If H has the ace, he must have too many cards in other suits ever to get a chance to fatten with it.

H, in leading up to the player, leads a suit in which he has neither ace nor ten. He has the clubs and diamonds stopped. V gets rid of a suit, so as to be ready to fatten.

The player knows he must lose a trick in diamonds, and it is better to lose it now, before V gets another discard. Had M been able to make this lead before V got that one discard, he would have won his game easily. It is the double chance to fatten that does the damage.

### The Adversaries' Play

The details of leading from certain combinations are practically the same as in solo, but it is more important in grand to keep control of the player's suit, if possible, and not to be in too great a hurry to give up tens on partner's aces while the player still follows suit.

No matter what the position of the player, one should never lead a short suit or a singleton against a grand. Discard singletons, but never lead them. When there are so few trumps in play, it is of vital



## Illustrative Hand No. 15

SOLO GRAND, BY MITTELHAND

<p>♣ A 10 7</p> <p>♦ 10 K Q 9 8 7</p> <p>♥ —————</p> <p>◇ 7</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <p>M</p> <p>V       H</p> <p>D</p> </div>	<p>♣ K Q 9</p> <p>♦ —————</p> <p>♥ Q 9 7</p> <p>◇ J 10 K 8</p>
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In skat; ♣ 8, ♥ 8.

M bids 10. V and H both pass. M is the player.  
M announces solo grand.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	10 ♣	A ♣	<u>J ◇</u>		23
2	7 ◇	<u>♥ A</u>	♥ 7	11	
3	♣ A	9 ◇	<u>10 ◇</u>		21
4	7 ♣	<u>♥ 10</u>	♥ 9	10	
5	8 ♣	<u>♥ J</u>	♥ Q	5	
6	9 ♣	<u>J ♣</u>	♣ 9	2	
7	♣ 7	<u>♣ J</u>	♣ Q	5	
8	Q ♣	<u>♥ K</u>	♣ K	11	
9	K ♣	<u>A ◇</u>	8 ◇	15	
10	♣ 10	Q ◇	<u>K ◇</u>		17

M gets 59 in play; 0 in skat, losing his game.  
Grand worth 16; 1 for game, "with" 3,  $-4 \times 16 = 64$  points.

importance to force the player to ruff, or to establish a suit against him by getting the ace out of his hand. The longer the suit is the better.

Fattening is a great thing for the adversaries in grand, and many a game has been lost by their piling up the points in two or three tricks. When the trick is doubtful, it is better to get rid of a suit than to fatten, because the discard enables one to fatten with better judgment later. In Illustrative Hand No. 13, M saves the game by following this rule.

It is bad policy to fatten with cards that might stop a suit. Three to the K may be valuable, and until it is evident that the K cannot win a trick in itself, it should not be thrown away.

The same methods that prevail in solo of giving your high cards to your partner's tricks and your low cards to the player's, hold good in grand.

## OPEN GRAND

OCCASIONALLY a player will be fortunate enough to have a hand of such strength that he thinks he cannot lose a trick. Under such circumstances he can announce that he will play it "open," that is, lay his cards face up on the table before a card is led, allowing the adversaries to study it at their leisure. They are, of course, not allowed to consult as to what to do, nor can they dictate to the player what cards he shall play or lead; but if they are mutually satisfied that they cannot take a trick, they may say so, and save themselves the trouble of playing the hand.

The unit value of an Open Grand is 24.

As it must be schwarz announced, there are 5 multipliers for that alone, and as no open grand is possible without the two best jacks, even in Vorhand, the lowest value of any open grand must be  $7 \times 24 = 168$ . As the highest possible adds only two more multipliers, the highest open grand must be  $9 \times 24 = 216$ . This is the highest possible game in Skat.

If the player loses a single trick, even if there are no counting cards in it, he loses everything. The skat cards go to increase his matadores, but they are otherwise of no value, because the game depends on winning every trick; not on the count.

A grand will sometimes make schwarz that could not have made it with the cards laid on the table, because when they see the hand the adversaries make no mistake about what to keep.

Here are a few examples of hands which are Grand Solo bids:

♣ J 9 8 7

♠ J 9

♥ A 10

♦ A 10

V only, and impossible to lose it.

♣ J A 10 K 7

♠ J

♥ A Q 9 7

♦ ———

V only, and impossible to lose.

♣ 9

♠ J 9

♥ J A 10 9 8 7

♦ J

Any hand, and impossible to lose.

♣ J A 10

♠ ———

♥ J A 10 9 8 7

♦ J

Open Grand for V only.  
Certain Solo Grand for any other.

If these cards are laid out, and the others distributed in as many positions as the ingenuity of the reader can suggest, it will be found that no distribution or play can defeat these hands.

## TOURNEE GRAND

IF the player who has bid a tournee turns up a jack, whether it is the first card or the second, he has the privilege of playing that suit for trumps, or of playing jacks for trumps; that is, a grand. Although the decision is sometimes difficult, he should be able to judge the possibilities of his hand pretty well if he has mastered the principles of bidding and playing grand solo. In the tournee grand, he has the immense advantage of being able to lay away dangerous cards in the skat.

The unit value of a Tournee Grand is 12.

As in other grands, the matadores are limited to four, but schneider or schwarz cannot be announced, because the skat cards have been used. If the tournee is a Passt-Mir-Nicht, the player loses double if he fails, whether he plays in suit or in grand.

If the first card is a jack, and it is not shown, the player cannot go back to it after having taken the second. If he wishes to play grand he must decide to do so when the jack is found, because if he puts the jack into his hand he must abide by the decision of the second card. If that should also be a jack, he can still have the choice between the suit and the jacks for trumps.

The choice naturally falls to the suit if the player is already long in it. As pointed out in the "Choice of Games," it is always better to select a weak suit for the trump, because the high cards in the other suits are good for tricks in any case. Agreeably to this principle, if the turn-up jack belongs to the weak suit, it is better to play in suit; but if it happens to be your strong suit, the others being weak, you do not gain much by making that suit the trump; in fact, you may have to put your trumps in the skat for safety, as in Illustrative Hand No. 2.

If the player is not long in the suit of the turn-up jack, the great question is his position at the table. If he is Vorhand, he has everything in his favour for a grand, especially if he has bid on two jacks and two aces, or one jack and three aces.

For M or H, the tournee is a very risky game if there is only one other jack in the hand, unless the rest of the hand is unusually strong, or there are cards which can be very advantageously laid away in the skat.

Illustrative Hand No. 16 is a very good example of a Tournee Grand. V gets the play without a bid and he has no solo worth risking, so he turns. After laying out the two 7's, his hand will check up to the seven rule, as it has two jacks and five other tricks. It is true that two out of the three remaining cards are counting cards, but being of the same suit as one

# Illustrative Hand No. 16

TOURNEE GRAND, BY VORHAND

	♣ 10 Q		
	♠ J 9 8		
	♥ K Q 9 8 7		
	♦ ———		
♣ J A 9 7			♣ K 8
♠ K Q			♠ A 7
♥ A 10			♥ J
♦ A 7			♦ 10 K Q 9 8

	M	
V		H
	D	

In skat; ♦ J, ♠ 10.

M and H both pass. V is the player. V turns ♦ J, and announces grand, laying ♣ 7 and ♦ 7 in the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♣ J	J ♠	♥ J	6	
2	K ♠	8 ♠	A ♠		15
3	A ♦	9 ♠	K ♦	15	
4	♣ 9	♣ 10	♣ K		14
5	♣ A	♣ Q	♣ 8	14	
6	♥ A	♥ 7	7 ♠	11	
7	♥ 10	♥ 8	8 ♦	10	
8	10 ♠	♥ 9	9 ♦	10	
9	Q ♠	♥ Q	Q ♦	9	
10	J ♦	♥ K	10 ♦	16	

V gets 91 in play, 0 in skat, winning schneider. Tournee Grand worth 12; 2 for schneider, "with" 1, =  $3 \times 12 = 36$  points.

of the tens, the adversaries cannot win either of the two without making the other good for a trick. If the player is fortunate enough to drop the other jacks together, he cannot possibly lose more than two tricks. Even if they are both in one hand, he can force that hand to trump before it can force him to trump.

H takes the first trick, so as to be sure of the 15 points it contains, because if his partner has the ace of diamonds, and the player refuses to trump the K, they are out of schneider. It is very probable that the player has no diamond and will discard, because when a player refuses to play in the suit turned up, he is usually short in it.

The object of Vorhand's lead at the fourth trick is to make schneider, if possible. He knows he must lose a trick in clubs, and if he postpones it until H, who is marked with four diamonds, has discarded all his clubs, H will fatten M's club trick with the 10 of diamonds, which will save schneider. It is impossible for them to get more than 14 points on this club trick, unless H has no clubs.

It may interest the reader to lay out these cards and play the hand in suit, diamonds. It will be found that the player loses his game, even if he lays the A 10 of trumps in the skat.

Illustrative Hand No. 17 is an example of the danger of playing a *tournee grand* that does not come up to the requirements of an ordinary *grand*.



# Illustrative Hand No. 17

TOURNEE GRAND, BY MITTELHAND

	♣ ———	
	♠ J A 10 K	
	♥ A 10 K 7	
	♦ K 7	
♣ K Q 7		♣ J A 10 9 8
♠ Q		♠ 9 7
♥ 8		♥ J Q 9
♦ A 10 Q 9 8		♦ ———

	M	
V		H
	D	

In skat; ♦ J, ♠ 8.

M bids 10. V and H both pass. M is the player. M turns ♦ J, and announces grand; laying ♦ K 7 in the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	A ♦	J ♦	♥ J		15
2	Q ♠	J ♠	♣ J		7
3	♣ K	♥ 7	♣ A		15
4	♣ Q	8 ♠	♣ 8		3
5	10 ♦	♥ K	♥ Q		17
6	Q ♦	K ♠	♥ 9		7
7	9 ♦	♥ 10	7 ♠		10
8	8 ♦	10 ♠	9 ♠		10
9	♣ 7	A ♠	♣ 10		21
10	♥ 8	♥ A	♣ 9		11

M, not getting a trick, cannot count his skat, and is made schwarz. Grand tournee worth 12; schwarz 3, "without" 1,  $= 4 \times 12 = 48$  points.

In the rules for bidding on grands, it was pointed out that M or H must have three suits if they have only two jacks. In this case M takes a chance, and loses rather heavily. Had he been more cautious and played a Passt-Mir-Nicht he would have won his game easily; but many persons seem to think that they can take liberties with a Tournee Grand that they would not think of with a Solo Grand.

The length of his suit does not deter V from leading the ace of it when playing against a grand, even if it is a tournee; because, if the player has laid away the suit, he must trump it, and cards must be led which are valuable enough to force him to trump and keep him from discarding.

H sees that if V has all the diamonds, the surest way to get out of schneider is to draw the player's remaining trump, which is better than trying to force it; because, if the player can trump clubs he cannot have three of them to the K, therefore all four of H's clubs should be good for tricks. Observe how V gets rid of a suit on the trump trick, so as to be ready to fatten.

The advantage of playing high cards on the partner's trick is apparent in this hand. When V puts the K on his partner's ace, he is marked with the Q, or only the 7, or no more. If he has the Q, he gets in to make his diamonds. If he has not the Q, H loses nothing by leading the 8 instead of the 10.

The result of the play is that M does not win a

single trick. As an example of the importance of position in grand, observe that if these cards had been in Vorhand, the Grand would have been invincible; in Mittelhand it loses schwarz!

As in Solo Grand, the player must be careful not to overestimate the value of jacks in a possible Tournee Grand. It is not the jacks, but the high cards in plain suits that make grands, yet beginners are constantly led into error by the idea that if they have all the trumps they must have a very fine hand. If it were a Solo, this would be true, and nothing could be better than ten trumps; but in grand the four jacks are not so valuable without something substantial behind them.

Suppose that Vorhand has the following cards, and turns up the jack of clubs:

♣ Q 9  
♠ J A  
♥ J K 9  
♦ J 10 8

There are not seven tricks in this hand by any means, nor could there be unless the other card in the skat is the ace of diamonds. The blank ace of spades makes the hand especially weak for a grand. With such cards the player should name the suit, clubs, as he has nothing to hope from a Passt-Mir-Nicht.

## GUCKI GRAND

It frequently happens that a player would be willing to attempt a grand, but for the fact that his losing cards are too valuable to contemplate giving them to the adversaries. We have seen the importance of having the smallest cards possible to give to the tricks which the other side must win, and the danger of having anything so good even as K's and Q's. When it comes to giving up 10's, with the prospect of having afterward to trump worthless cards of the same suit, or else stand by and see one partner fatten while the other leads, the outlook is too discouraging to admit of attempting a grand.

If the rest of the hand is so strong that the player can well afford to lose an unguarded 10, as in Illustrative Hand No. 6, it does not matter so much. It is when the loss of counting cards is likely to be fatal to success that the difficulty arises. The part of the hand that the player wants to play is an undoubted grand, if he could only exchange his counting cards in some of the suits for non-counting cards. He would be perfectly willing to try a grand if he could give his adversaries two tens in exchange for two sevens before the play began.

Modern Skat has provided for this contingency, as for all others. The solution of the problem is the invention of the Gucki Grand.

The word is derived from "gucken," which resembles our word "to look"; but it has in it something of the idea of added pleasure, somewhat of a surreptitious kind. Perhaps "peep" comes nearer to it, but there is a shade of difference.

The advantage of Gucki Grand over Solo Grand is, that the player gets an opportunity to put his dangerous cards in the skat.

The unit value of a Gucki Grand is 12; the same as that of a Tournée Grand, but with this difference: If the player loses his game, he loses double, just as he does in playing a Passt-Mir-Nicht.

When the successful bidder wishes to play Gucki, he takes both the skat cards into his hand at the same time, without showing either of them. After due consideration, he lays out two cards for his skat. No matter what cards he finds when he picks up the skat, he must play Grand, jacks being the only trumps.

It is not necessary to announce beforehand that Gucki is to be the game, because when the Simple game is not allowed the mere fact that he takes up both the skat cards at the same time announces his game for him.

The lowest value of a Gucki Grand is "with" 1, and 1 for the game,  $= 2 \times 12 = 24$  points, and any

player who has not bid more than that amount may guck. If he is with or without two or more matadores, he can, of course, bid more than 24, but if he bids "without" he runs the same risk that he does in any other form of the game.

### Bidding

Any hand which is good enough to count up to seven tricks, like a Grand, is good enough to guck with, and it has the advantage that it is not so much affected by the table position as a Solo Grand. In counting the hand to see if it will reach the necessary seven, one may reckon unguarded tens, because they can be laid away in the skat, where they will be safe from the attacks of the enemy.

Take the following cards in Vorhand:

♣ J A 10  
♦ J K 7  
♥ A 10  
◇ 10 7

As a Solo Grand, this game would be easily lost; as a gucki it is impossible to lose it. If the 10 of diamonds is laid away in the skat, no matter what else is found there or what spade or diamond is put back there with the 10 of diamonds, the adversaries cannot pile counting cards enough on the last four tricks to reach more than 57 points, as experiment will prove.

# Illustrative Hand No. 18

GUCKI GRAND, BY MITTELHAND

	♣ A 10		
	♠ J A 10		
	♥ J 10 9		
	♦ Q 9		
♣ K Q 9 8 7			♣ ———
♠ ———			♠ K Q 9 8 7
♥ Q 8			♥ A K 7
♦ J A 7			♦ 10 K

	M	
V		H
	D	

In skat; ♣ J, ♦ 8.

M bids 10. V and H both pass. M is the player. M takes both skat cards, and lays out the ♥ 10 9, for the skat.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♣ K	♣ A	7 ♠	15	
2	J ♦	♥ J	♥ 7	4	
3	7 ♦	8 ♦	10 ♦		10
4	♣ 7	A ♠	8 ♠	11	
5	A ♦	9 ♦	K ♦		15
6	♣ 8	♣ 10	9 ♠	10	
7	♣ 9	Q ♦	Q ♠	6	
8	♥ 8	10 ♠	K ♠	14	
9	♥ Q	♣ J	♥ K	9	
10	♣ Q	J ♠	♥ A	16	

M gets 85 in play, 10 in skat, 95; winning schneider. Gucki grand worth 12; schneider 2, "with" 3, =  $5 \times 12 = 60$  points.

Some players have a habit of bidding gucki whenever they find themselves with four jacks, but such a proceeding is just as dangerous in a gucki grand as it would be in a solo grand. It will be found a safe rule never to guck unless you have dangerous cards to lay away in a hand which is otherwise a fair Solo Grand.

Gucki has about it more of the element of speculation than any other of the games, and the novice is liable to be carried away by his imagination as to what he will find in the skat. A little boldness does no harm occasionally, especially if there is no strong bidding from the other players.

Illustrative Hand No. 18 is a fair specimen of a gucki with a little dash of speculation in it. If Mittelhand should find two small cards in the skat, especially two small diamonds, he would have to be very fortunate with his black suits to win his game. When he finds the third jack, his hand jumps at once to the rank of the seven-trick standard.

It would be bad policy to weaken the diamond suit, which has the advantage of length, in order to keep the small heart, now that M can well afford to ruff hearts. As there is a possibility of establishing a trick in diamonds, M may as well lay both the hearts in the skat.

V leads his longest suit, and M is fortunate in getting into the lead early. After drawing the adverse jack, it is better to lead diamonds immediately, before one adversary can discard the suit and get ready to



fatten. Even if they make every trick in diamonds, they do not save schneider unless one of them can fatten. It should be observed that V does not overtake his partner's 10 of diamonds, because he knows the player must have more of the suit, and 21 points is not enough to take them out of schneider. As H never has a chance to fatten with his ace of hearts, he holds on to his tenace in that suit as long as there is any chance that the player has hearts.

### Laying Out

In laying out for the skat in gucki, it is better, if possible, to get rid of an entire suit, keeping the best protected or the longest suit intact. If this is not feasible, lay away one each of two suits. Lay away all counting cards like blank tens or tens which are not well guarded. It is never necessary to lay away the 10 of a suit because the suit is too long, as in a Tournee, because there is not the same danger of its being trumped, and a ten is a valuable trick-winning card.

If the player has the 10 and small in one suit and a singleton in another suit, it is better to lay away the singleton and the ten, as explained in laying out for Tournee. It is a mistake to shorten up two suits, if one of them might be made good for a trick. We have just seen how the player avoids this error in Illustrative Hand No. 18.

The player should keep the tens of suits of which he has not the aces, only when these tens are very necessary to get the lead or to stop a suit. When the player has 10 and K, he should keep them both, so as to be sure of a trick in the suit. It is a common mistake to keep a suit headed by the ace without the 10 or K, and to lay away a suit in which the cards are in sequence, especially the 10 of a 10 K suit.

Illustrative Hand No. 19 is an example of this mistake, which in this case was expensive.

The player was right in laying out the blank 10 of spades, which is a card that must be put in the skat in any case. His idea in putting the 10 of hearts in the skat was, that with all four jacks he did not need to stop the heart suit, as he could well afford to trump it, overlooking the fact that he was keeping two losing cards in clubs, neither of which was good enough to establish the other if there should be three clubs in one hand against it.

As the hand is played, H could not win his game. V starts out with his long suit, of course, leading the K to force the ace and make the 10 good for a trick. H refuses to win the K, because his small clubs will then be useless and likely to be caught, whereas he has tenace in clubs with his A Q if he keeps them.

V judges from his partner's discard that H has nothing in spades, because he would not keep the 10 Q,

## Illustrative Hand No. 19

GUCKI GRAND, BY HINTERHAND

	♣ ————— ♠ Q 9 ♥ A Q 8 7 ♦ 10 Q 9 8	
♣ 10 K 8 7 ♠ A K 8 7 ♥ 9 ♦ A	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">M</div> <div style="text-align: center;">H</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 10px;"> <span>V</span> <span>D</span> </div>	♣ A Q ♠ J 10 ♥ J 10 K ♦ J K 7

In skat; ♣ J 9.

M passes. H bids 10. V passes. H is the player.  
 H takes both skat cards and lays out the ♠ 10 and ♥ 10.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♣ K	9 ♠	♣ 9	16	4
2	A ♦	Q ♦	7 ♦		14
3	A ♠	Q ♠	J ♦		
4	♥ 9	♥ A	♥ K		15
5	K ♠	10 ♦	K ♦	2	18
6	7 ♠	9 ♦	♥ J		
7	8 ♠	♥ Q	J ♠	5	
8	♣ 7	♥ 7	♣ J	2	
9	♣ 8	♥ 8	♣ A	11	
10	♣ 10	8 ♦	♣ Q		13

H gets 36 in play and 20 in skat, 56; losing his game. Gucki grand worth 12; 1 for game, "with" 4, = 5 × 12 = 60; loses double, 120 points.

so that the player's strength must be in the red suits, outside of his clubs. As V can make but one trick in diamonds, he leads the ace at once. On this trick M is careful not to give up the 10. Now V has to lead a card valuable enough to force the player to trump. If V leads a small spade at this stage, H will get rid of the K of diamonds and win his game. If V fattens with the 10 of clubs at trick 5, the player wins his game. As long as the player does not discard a club, V knows that his 10 is good for a trick, as H must have A Q. But if H had refused to trump the 9 of diamonds, discarding a club, then V would have fattened with the 10 of clubs, because that would win the game for the adversaries.

If this hand is played over again, laying out the spade 10 and the K of diamonds, and keeping the 10 and K of hearts, the player wins his game easily, by leading the 10 of hearts at the fourth trick, so as to be sure of making the K good, just as V does in Illustrative Hand No. 20.

### Leading

When the player has both A and 10 of a suit, he should lead them right out, so as to get them home before the adversaries discard, and also to clear the suit, if there are any smaller cards in it. With A 10 K it is good policy to lead the A and then the K, to

coax a fatten from the second hand. Some players begin with the K, but if the suit is not very long this is a mistake, as the second hand will almost certainly have at least one of the suit, and could not fatten on the first round even if he wished to.

With the ace and small cards it is better to begin with the small card and get the 10 out of the way at once. If the A is led first and followed by the small card, one adversary may be able to fatten his partner's trick by that time.

The management of the jacks is the same as in Solo Grand, and there is the same importance to be attached to forcing with a strong suit when you have not the commanding jacks.

When a player has kept a suit in which he has 10 K, he cannot afford to lead the K to force out the ace, unless he has a small card as well as the 10, because the adversary will not win the K, but will wait for the 10, and by the time the player is forced to lead the 10, or it is taken out of him by the ace, the other adversary will have gotten ready to fatten. When the adversaries lead from this combination, they lead the K, but when the player leads it, he must start with the 10. If he cannot afford to do this, he should have laid the 10 in the skat.

Illustrative Hand No. 20 is a good example of this situation. The player has not by any means a very strong gucki hand, but there is nothing much against

him, and he has a fair chance if he finds anything in the skat and can lay out the 10 of diamonds.

To lay out two cards of one suit and keep two cards of another is usually bad policy, especially when one has to guess which suit to keep, so he lays out the two Q's and keeps the 10 and K of diamonds together.

As one trick in diamonds must be lost, V loses it at once, before one adversary gets ready to fatten by discarding the suit. He follows the rule and leads the 10, not the K. If H should refuse to win this 10, the player would make his six sure tricks at once, winning his game before losing the lead again.

On the second round of spades, taking it for granted that M will have to follow suit with a small spade, V gets rid of his losing heart, in order to prevent the adversaries from making 21 points in one heart trick. Even if H had led the ace of hearts instead of the 10 of spades, he could not have saved the game.

This all looks very simple, because after the first trick the adversaries cannot save the game, no matter what they do; but if these cards are laid out and the hand played over again, letting Vorhand lead the K of diamonds instead of the 10, it will be found that he loses his game just as easily as he could have won it.

Whether the K of diamonds is led before or after leading the ace and ten of clubs does not matter, because M will play the 7 and H will hold up the ace. When H gets in on whatever V leads, M will be able

## Illustrative Hand No. 20

GUCKI GRAND, BY VORHAND

<p>♣ J A 10          ♠ Q 7          ♥ J Q 7          ♦ J 10</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <p style="margin: 0;">M</p> <p style="margin: 0;">V                  H</p> <p style="margin: 0;">D</p> </div>	<p>♣ Q 9          ♠ A 10          ♥ A 9          ♦ A Q 9 8</p>
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In skat; ♠ J, and ♦ K.

M and H both pass. V is the player. V takes both the skat cards and lays out the ♠ Q and ♥ Q.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	10♦	7♦	<u>A♦</u>		21
2	7♠	K♠	<u>A♠</u>		15
3	♥ 7	9♠	<u>10♠</u>		10
4	<u>K♦</u>	8♠	8♦	4	
5	<u>♣ A</u>	♣ 7	♣ 9	11	
6	<u>♣ 10</u>	♣ 8	♣ Q	13	
7	<u>♣ J</u>	♥ 8	9♦	2	
8	<u>J♠</u>	♣ K	Q♦	9	
9	<u>♥ J</u>	♥ K	♥ 9	6	
10	<u>J♦</u>	♥ 10	♥ A	23	

V gets 68 in play and 6 in skat, 74; winning his game. Gucki grand worth 12; 1 for game, "with" 4, -  $5 \times 12 = 60$  points.

to fatten with the 10 of hearts and two K's, making them 61 points.

### Adversaries' Play

In playing against a gucki, the same rules must be followed that were given for Solo Grand. Never lead singletons as an opening, but try to get rid of them in the discards.

As the player has had an opportunity to lay away for the skat, it is unlikely that he has any unguarded tens in his hand, and it is therefore better to fatten with a guarded ace than with a guarded ten.

Partners must not be in too great a hurry to throw tens on aces, if the player has the suit, and especially if it is the only way of saving the game or schneider. It is not so necessary for the partners to throw tens on tricks that they know the partner can win, unless these tens are in danger. A guarded ten may be just enough to stop the player from getting his 61.

It is hardly worth while trying to catch the player's cards by leading through him, as one would in Solo, because the player cannot be so easily caught with unguarded cards as in Grand or Solo, since he has had an opportunity to clear his hand by laying out for the skat.

In Gucki, as in other forms of the game, it is always an advantage to get the player in the middle, and



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to prevent him from discarding on tricks which are not worth trumping.

The adversaries should adhere faithfully to the rule of giving the highest cards of a suit to the partner's trick and the lowest to the player. Nothing enables a partner to read the situation so well as this simple convention in the play.

In playing against Gucki Solos, much the same principles should be followed, it being especially necessary to remember that the player has had an opportunity to lay away any unguarded tens. It is therefore better to fatten with aces, if possible, and keep guarded tens.

It must also be remembered that perhaps a player who was bidding with the intention of playing a grand may have shifted to the solo on seeing the Skat cards; or perhaps he was bidding to play solo, and the Skat cards have made it appear a better gucki grand. The number of points bid will often be a guide in determining this point, and in guiding the play of the adversaries.

## RAMSCH

THIS variety of the game is, strictly speaking, a Grand, because in it the four jacks are the only trumps; but it differs from Grand inasmuch as each man is for himself, and the object of the game is to lose, not to win.

No one can bid for a Ramsch, and the only player who can announce it is Vorhand, and he is allowed to do so only when neither of the other players will make a bid. In some places V is allowed to call for Ramsch if no one has bid more than 10, because modern players usually bid 10 whether they have anything or not, just to start things. But the strict rules of the game require Ramsch to be played only when neither M nor H will make a bid and V does not care to risk any game himself.

Ramsch is intended as a punishment for those who sit back and refuse to bid on good hands, preferring to let some other player over-exert himself in a vain effort to win a game that is hopeless. When it is discovered that one of these over-cautious players is in the game, the best remedy for the evil is a few declarations of Ramsch, because in Ramsch the player with a handful of good cards loses the game.

There being no partnership in Ramsch, each player takes in his own tricks and the skat cards are disregarded entirely. In some places it has been the rule to make the winner of the last trick take the skat cards. Such a rule is not only ridiculous, but manifestly unfair, because in Ramsch a player does not speculate on what is in the skat, but seeks to punish the player who will not bid on his hands.

Ramsch costs 20. There is no unit value to the game to be increased by multipliers. The amount is simply charged to the player who has taken in the most points, just as if he had lost a game that was worth 20.

If the result is a tie, the player who wins the last trick loses the 20.

If one player has not taken a trick, the Ramsch costs the loser 30, instead of 20. Should it happen that two players did not take a trick, it would cost the player who took all the tricks 50.

Although not often called for in play, Ramsch is a very interesting form of the game, and requires considerable skill. It is not necessary to keep any mental count of the points taken in, the principal thing being to watch the fall of the cards and to infer what the other players have.

The most important thing in opening the hand is to lead red jacks, if you have them, so as to avoid being forced to trump yourself in at the end of the hand.

This will compel the player with the higher jack to win the trick.

If you have either of the black jacks, do not lead a J of any kind, and do not play them unless you are obliged to follow suit when jacks are led; even then, you should not overtake another player's jack unless you are obliged to do so. Wait for an opportunity to trump some worthless trick with the black jacks. The club jack is so often in the skat when no one bids that it is dangerous to lead the spade jack.

In Ramsch, the player should try to get a missing suit as early as possible, so as to be ready to discard high cards of other suits when that suit is led. Even if a player has nothing more dangerous than a K, it is just as well to be rid of it.

One of the best opening leads is a long suit that has small cards in it, so that the adversaries shall not be able to bring the holder of such a suit into the lead at the end. When one player remains with all there is of a suit, all he need do is to see to it that he does not get put in the lead with some other suit. A long suit is always more dangerous when another player has cards in it which the holder of the long suit might be obliged to win.

From two-card suits, it is better to lead the higher card first, such as the K from K and 8; but from three-card suits, such as A Q 7, lead the intermediate card first.

If you have cards that must win tricks, it is better to lead them early, before one adversary gets ready to discard on that suit. Singleton aces are good leads, if there is no prospect of discarding them.

It is important to hold back small cards which you know will get rid of the lead in case of emergency. You must expect the adversaries to adopt the same tactics, therefore when you have a long suit without the 7, you should lead it, so as to get the 7 out of their hands.

It is not always aces and tens that are the dangerous cards in Ramsch, and one must be careful to get rid of 8's and 9's if the 7 of the suit is still to come and probably in the hand of another player.

Illustrative Hand No. 21 will give one a very fair idea of the tactics adopted in Ramsch. V cannot play Tournee with only one suit, and he is not strong enough to risk a heart solo. The best thing for his hand seems to be Ramsch.

Having both the red jacks, V leads one of them in order to get rid of it cheaply and at the same time to get rid of the lead. M gets rid of a high counting card in preference to the singleton, and H gets rid of his singleton before trying the intermediate club.

Upon this trick V gets rid of the dangerous 9 of diamonds. If he discards a heart he will immediately be put in with a diamond, and after losing one heart trick to H, will have to win the next and every re-

maining trick. Upon seeing the discard of the diamond, M infers that the ace is not in play, and he sees that if he does not win this club trick while it is cheap he may be compelled to win every other trick if H has the 7 of clubs and the 10 is in the skat. Before trying to get rid of the lead, M clears his hand of the singleton heart and the dangerous spade.

Trick 6 is the interesting part of the hand. H knows that if he puts the 10 of clubs on the 8, he will certainly get a high counting card from V. He also knows that as M has denied the club jack and as there are three clubs still unaccounted for, M must have at least one of them. His only hope of escape is that M has the A and not the 9, and that if M is allowed to hold the lead he will shift to a diamond and give H a discard. If H deliberately takes this trick, he may not take another trick after he returns the 7, but in the meantime he will probably have taken in points enough to lose the game. As will be seen, if the hand is played over again, H would get 74 points if he put the 10 on this trick and returned the 7, because V would trump the diamond and lead the 7 of spades.

H's calculations are upset by V's trumping the trick and leading the spade. V does not think he will ever get a better chance to get rid of his jack, which he assumes must win a trick, as the club jack is probably in the skat.

## Illustrative Hand No. 21

RAMSCH

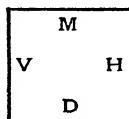
♣ A K 9 8

♠ A K

♥ Q

♦ K 8 7

♣ ———  
 ♠ 9 7  
 ♥ J A K 9 7  
 ♦ J Q 9



♣ 10 Q 7  
 ♠ J 10 Q 8  
 ♥ 10 8  
 ♦ 10

In skat; ♣ J and ♦ A.

M and H both pass. V is the player. Having no game he cares to risk, he announces Ramsch.

TRICK	V	M	H	V	M	H
1	♥ J	A ♠	<u>J ♠</u>			15
2	Q ♦	K ♦	<u>10 ♦</u>			17
3	9 ♦	<u>♣ K</u>	♣ Q		7	
4	♥ 9	<u>♥ Q</u>	♥ 8		3	
5	9 ♠	<u>K ♠</u>	Q ♠		7	
6	<u>J ♦</u>	♣ 8	♣ 7	2		
7	7 ♠	♣ A	<u>8 ♠</u>			11
8	♥ K	♣ 9	<u>♥ 10</u>			14
9	♥ A	8 ♦	<u>10 ♠</u>			21
10	♥ 7	7 ♦	<u>♣ 10</u>			10

V gets 2; M gets 17; H gets 88. Ramsch is worth 20 when all three players take tricks, so H loses 20.

The outcome of a Ramsch is sometimes no less surprising than in other forms of the game, and a hand that looks as if it were invincible may go to pieces in the most remarkable manner.

Illustrative Hand No. 22 is a neat example of what sometimes happens in Skat. V has no excuse for attempting any game, unless Simple were allowed, and with his small cards and missing suit, his hand seems an ideal one for Ramsch.

V knows the danger of leading jacks when you have either of the black ones, and have not the lowest. He has the choice of opening between hearts and clubs, and selects the club in order to exhaust it in the other hands, if possible, so that another player shall not be able to keep the 7 to put him in with later. As the cards lie, it does not matter which suit V leads.

M gets rid of a suit on the first trick, and this discard makes V afraid of the heart suit, and with good reason. He knows H can underplay him in clubs, so he tries the diamond. M must win this trick, so as to keep the 7 of the suit, with which to get rid of the lead, or he will be compelled to win every other trick but those that fall to the jacks at the end, by which time tricks will be cheap. The discard of the spade K makes his danger still more apparent, so he takes the chance that V has still two diamonds and will be obliged to win the second round. If M leads



## Illustrative Hand No. 22

RAMSCH

<p>♣ J 10 Q 8</p> <p>♠ —————</p> <p>♥ J K 8</p> <p>♦ Q 9 8</p>	<p>♣ —————</p> <p>♠ A 10 Q 8 7</p> <p>♥ 10</p> <p>♦ A 10 K 7</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 100px; margin: 10px auto; position: relative;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 5px; left: 50%; transform: translate(-50%, -50%);">M</div> <div style="position: absolute; bottom: 5px; left: 50%; transform: translate(-50%, -50%);">D</div> <div style="position: absolute; left: 10%; top: 50%; transform: translateY(-50%);">V</div> <div style="position: absolute; right: 10%; top: 50%; transform: translateY(-50%);">H</div> </div>	<p>♣ K 9 7</p> <p>♠ J K</p> <p>♥ A Q 9 7</p> <p>♦ J</p>
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In skat; ♣ A, ♠ 9.

M and H both pass. V is the player. Having no game he cares to risk, he announces Ramsch.

TRICK	V	M	H	V	M	H
1	<u>♣ Q</u>	♥ 10	♣ 9	13		
2	<u>Q ♦</u>	<u>K ♦</u>	K ♠		11	
3	<u>9 ♦</u>	<u>10 ♦</u>	♥ A		21	
4	<u>8 ♦</u>	7 ♦	♥ Q	3		
5	<u>♥ J</u>	A ♦	J ♦	15		
6	<u>♥ K</u>	A ♠	♥ 9	15		
7	<u>♥ 8</u>	10 ♠	♥ 7	10		
8	<u>♣ 10</u>	Q ♠	♣ K	17		
9	<u>♣ 8</u>	8 ♠	♣ 7	—		
10	<u>♣ J</u>	7 ♠	J ♠	4		

V gets 77 points; M gets 32; H gets 0. As one player has not taken a trick, Ramsch is worth 30, which V loses.

the 7 before getting rid of the 10, V will put him right in again with the 8.

V's only chance to get out of the scrape is to lead the heart jack. If the club jack is with the spades or with the diamonds, V may still escape.

## NULLO

### No Trumps and No Values

WE come now to a variation which has nothing in common with Skat, and is evidently a graft upon the original conception of the game. History tells us that Nullo came before Tournee, and also before Grand Solo was played with jacks for trumps. As the Grand was originally an absolutely trumpless game, it may have suggested Nullo.

Nullo, under the name of *Misère*, is common to many of the older games of cards, and is usually so popular that it has even been suggested as an addition to the game of bridge. When Grand Solo was played without any trumps, the J's ranked below the Q's, and it probably occurred to some of the proverbial "poor card-holders" whom we have always with us, that a no-trumper that was played to lose would be a good offset to the no-trumpers that were played to win. Be that as it may, once brought into the game, nothing has been able to drive it out. The Nullo is here to stay.

The word "nullo" better describes this variety of Skat than the word "*misère*," for "nullo" signifies the absence of anything tangible.

In Nullo, there are no trumps, no matadores, and no skat. The suits have no rank, the 10's come next to the 9's, the J's have no power, and fall below the Q's. The pips on the cards have no value, and the object is not to win, but to lose, and this object is not, as in Ramsch, to lose less than another player; but to lose everything, every trick and every point, so that you shall be absolutely null and void; because winning a single trick means the loss of the game.

In spite of its being so widely different from other forms of Skat, Nullo is decidedly interesting, and some persons would rather play Nullos than eat; in fact, the game has a fascination for some minds that it is difficult to explain; and the most cheerful people seem to like it best.

The value of Nullo is 20 points.

As there are no matadores, no schneider and schwarz, 20 it must remain. The only way in which the value of the game may be increased is to play the hand open, like an Open Grand. As Nullo is declared by a single player, as his game, against the two others, he can lay his cards face up on the table before a card is played and let his adversaries study them at their leisure before they play. They are not allowed to consult, of course, or to offer any suggestions the one to the other as to what should be done. If the player wins his game with his cards open, he wins double: 40 points. As if to show that the game was quite

foreign to Skat, some Germans call it by a hybrid German French name, Null-Ouvert. The French never use this term "ouvert" in card games. They call hands played in this manner, "sur table."

In Northern Germany it is still the custom not to lay the cards down until after the first trick, which gives the player a decided advantage. This explains the wonderful hand by Prince Piombino in "The Mascotte," who played an open nullo with the whole heart suit and two black aces in his hand. The Prince was Mittelhand, and Vorhand led a diamond, on which the Prince discarded the ace of clubs. He had nothing but clubs and diamonds, so the Prince could not be prevented from getting rid of his ace of spades, even after they had seen his cards. His luck in discarding the right ace on the first trick, to say nothing of his winning such a game under any circumstances, is enough to justify his title as a Mascotte.

The cards in Nullo rank A K Q J 10 9 8 7, the ace being the highest. Any bid that does not exceed 20 can play Nullo, but if the bid is more than 20 a Nullo must be played open, or it is lost.

The player who announces the game is opposed to the two others, and the V leads for the first trick. The points in the cards are not reckoned, for the moment the player takes a single trick, even with nothing in it, his game is lost.

The game looks simple, but like many other simple

things there is more in it than appears upon the surface, and very few people play Nullo well, especially when opposed to the declaring hand.

## Bidding

It is not necessary to offer 20 immediately, even if the player knows his game is worth just that amount; because by approaching this figure gradually, the purpose is concealed, and the opposing bidder may think the hand is strong, instead of weak, which will sometimes induce him to relinquish a game which he might have persevered in had he known that one of his adversaries had nothing in his hand. In bidding, it is always well to begin with the conventional 10.

In estimating the hand for a possible Nullo, the J's should be put with their suits, and the 10's should be placed between the J and the 9, so as to get a proper idea of the sequences of low cards in each suit.

A long suit without the 7 is dangerous; because if one player renounces, the other will lead the suit until he makes you win his 7. A suit with only 10 8 in it is very weak. Nullo should never be attempted with dangerous cards, such as poorly guarded K's and Q's, unless there is a good chance to discard them on a missing suit. The best hands on which to bid Nullo are those in which you have a missing suit and only one

dangerous card that you must get rid of by discarding. To play Nullo with two dangerous cards is folly, unless you are a Mascotte. If there are no dangerous cards in the hand, it is obviously an open Nullo.

## Position

Vorhand is the worst position for nullo, just as it is the best for all other games, unless the hand is to be played open. When the player is V, he is compelled to lead some absolutely safe card, to which both adversaries play the highest they have in the suit. They then get the player in the middle, and he usually has an anxious time of it.

The best position for Nullo is Hinterhand, because he can play intermediate cards, and just get under whatever his adversaries play. He also gets a better idea of the situation when they open the game, while they know less about what to do than when the player leads for the first trick himself.

Here are some examples of hands on which one might bid Nullo:

♣ 10 8 7

♠ K 9 8 7

♥ 10 8

♦ 7

Heart 10 is dangerous, and  
discard doubtful.

♣ K Q 9 8 7

♠ ———

♥ Q J 9 7

♦ Q

A fair chance, as discard is  
probable.

♣ K 7

♠ 10 9 8 7

♥ —————

♦ A K 8 7

Rather risky in two suits,  
but tempting.

♣ 8 7

♠ K J 9 7

♥ Q J 8 7

♦ —————

Play this Open. If V, lead  
a club.

## Leading

If the player is Vorhand, the opening lead will often decide his fate. With a singleton 8 or 9, it is better to lead it at once, before the adversaries get discards, because while both can follow suit, one must win the trick. With 9 7 only, it is better to lead the 9 than the 7; because if you lead the 7 one player may win it with a high card, give his partner discards, and then put you in with the 8.

The player should never lead a singleton 7 with the idea of getting discards on that suit, because the adversaries will assume that he is safe in that suit and will never return it, so that he cannot get the discard he hopes for. This fact may be used to advantage when the player holds a dangerous suit which he must lead, as when the others end in 9 7. If the dangerous suit is K 7, for instance, lead the 7, and as that suit will not be returned, the hoped-for discard may be obtained.

The player should never lead six-card suits, because the remaining cards may both be in the skat.



## Discarding

The player should carefully watch the fall of the cards and get rid of those which are likely to prove dangerous in preference to discarding those which are simply high. It is always well to get rid of a suit, but one should never discard from a suit that is safe until everything else is gone. It is useless to discard the A from an A 10 8 7 suit, for instance.

## Adversaries' Play

The position of the player makes no difference to the adversaries in Nullo, and the strategy of their game is the same, no matter where he sits, when it comes to their turn to lead.

The best leads are singletons, because they enable the player to discard from other suits. For this reason it is often more important to discard a singleton than to get rid of a high card.

With three cards, such as A Q 7, play the middle card first, and then the 7. With two only, such as A 7, lead the ace first. The distinction between these two leads will make it clear to the partner, when A 7 or K 7 is the lead, that the leader has no more.

The adversaries should be very cautious about returning the player's opening lead, if he is V, unless it is obvious that he can follow suit.

It is most important to prevent the player from get-

ting discards, because if he can get one good discard, his game is usually safe.

Always return the partner's lead, or lead the suit he discards. The adversary should scheme, if possible, to give his partner discards without allowing any to the player.

When the player is V and leads a 9, second hand should not overtake it if he is long in the suit, unless he cannot help it, because it may be a singleton, and third hand may have the lower card, or the player may have the 7 and third hand may renounce.

Illustrative Hand No. 23 will give one a very fair idea of the tactics adopted in playing against a Nullo. The cards held by Hinterhand are not quite safe, but they are tempting. The great weakness of the hand lies in the fact that he is not likely to get any discards early enough to be useful, and also that he has two 10 7 suits. If opposed to less skilful players he would very likely have won his game easily.

V begins with a singleton, and M, knowing it to be V's shortest suit, puts up his best card and continues the suit, in order to give his partner discards. Observe that if H had held the K of hearts he would have put it on the ace, so that card is marked in the skat.

Having exhausted his hearts, M turns to the suit that his partner has discarded, and leads that. V continues to discard his next shorter suit, beginning with the highest cards.

# Illustrative Hand No. 23

NULLO

	♣ 8		
	♠ A K 8		
	♥ A Q 10		
	♦ K J 10		
♣ A K Q 9		M	♣ 10 7
♠ Q J 9		V      H	♠ 10 7
♥ J			♥ 9 8 7
♦ A Q		D	♦ 9 8 7

In skat; ♣ J and ♥ K.

M bids 10 and passes. H bids 12. V passes. H is the player, and he announces Nullo.

TRICK	V	M	H	+	-
1	♥ J	♥ A	♥ 9		
2	A ♦	♥ Q	♥ 8		
3	Q ♦	♥ 10	♥ 7		
4	Q ♠	K ♦	9 ♦		
5	J ♠	J ♦	8 ♦		
6	9 ♠	10 ♦	7 ♦		
7	♣ A	8 ♠	7 ♠		
8	♣ K	A ♠	10 ♠		
9	♣ Q	♣ 8	♣ 7		
10	♣ 9	K ♠	♣ 10		

Having taken a trick, H loses his game, 20 points.

At the sixth trick, M knows that the spade 10 is either in H or in skat. If V has the 7 of spades, H has the 10 and three clubs, but if H has the 7, which is most likely, he has either the 10 with it, in which case he is safe in spades, or he has three clubs. No matter what the position may be, M can lose nothing by leading a low spade, because he is confident that all the cards in H are black.

At the eighth trick, H has either two clubs and a spade, or three clubs. If he has three clubs, one discard will do him no good. If he has not three clubs, he must follow suit to another round of spades.

On the club, V wins with his higher card and returns the lower, and at the eleventh hour H loses his game by being compelled to win a trick.

### Gucki Nullo

This variation, which is not always played, allows the bidder to take both the skat cards into his hand and to lay out two cards before playing the hand. This enables him to get rid of dangerous cards, if he is fortunate enough, or his hand is such that he cannot find still more dangerous ones in the skat.

The game is still 20, but if lost, it counts double, like Passt Mir-Nicht. When the player takes up both skat cards for a Nullo, he must say "Nullo," to distinguish it from Grand.

## TEST HANDS

It may be interesting for the reader, after having mastered all the varieties of Skat, to try his skill on a few hands.

No. 1.

♣ J A 10 8 7  
 ♠ J 10  
 ♥ J 10  
 ♦ J

Is this a Grand or Club Solo, for Vorhand?

No. 2.

♣ J  
 ♠ J  
 ♥ J K Q 8 7  
 ♦ J A Q

Is this a heart Solo or Grand, for Mittelhand?

No. 3.

♣ J Q 9 8 7  
 ♠ J A  
 ♥ J A  
 ♦ J

Is this a Club Solo, schneider announced, or Grand, for Hinterhand?

No. 4.

♣ J A 10 K Q  
 ♠ J 10  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ J 10

Is this a Club Solo, or a Solo Grand, or a Gucki Grand, for Vorhand?

No. 5.

♣ 9  
 ♠ —————  
 ♥ J A 10 K Q 9 7  
 ♦ J 7

Is this a heart Solo, a Grand Solo, or a Nullo for Vorhand?

No. 6.

♣ 10  
 ♠ 10  
 ♥ 10  
 ♦ J A 10 K Q 9 7

Is this a diamond Solo, or a Gucki Grand, or a Ramsch, for Vorhand?

## VARIETIES OF SKAT

THERE are one or two variations of which one hears occasionally, but which are not in the standard game. When played, they must be a matter of agreement beforehand.

*Tournee Nullo.*—When a player turns up a 7, whether it be the first card or the second, he may announce Nullo. If it be the second card, he loses double if he fails. The value of a Turned Nullo is 10 points only.

*Revolution.*—This is an open Nullo, but when announced, all three players lay their cards on the table, and the two adversaries have a right to exchange cards with one another as much as they please and also to consult as to what might be done. If the player's game is invincible, no matter what cards are out against him, the skat not being touched, he wins 60 points.

*Schiebe Ramsch.*—In this the Vorhand takes the two skat cards into his hand and lays out two in their place. Mittelhand must take these two and lay out two for Hinterhand, who takes them up and lays out

---

two of his own choice. In this form, the number of points taken in by the player who has the most are charged to him as the value of the game lost. If two tie, they each lose half, so that the total loss is still equal to the highest number of points taken in.

## MANAGEMENT OF SKAT TOURNAMENTS

WHEN a large number of players are engaged in any form of competition, for social or charitable purposes, it is always desirable not only to make the game enjoyable, but to keep it as closely to the lines of the ordinary game as possible.

Leaving out of consideration the duplicate system of playing, which is rather too troublesome and requires too much apparatus to regard it as a good form of amusement for mixed gatherings, there are still two very good but quite distinct methods of arranging Skat tournaments.

In the first method, the number of candidates for play is divided by four, in order to ascertain how many tables of four each can be filled. Supposing this number of tables to be ten, the management picks out from the forty players ten who are known to be thoroughly conversant with the game, and can be depended upon to keep the scores correctly and to settle any disputes in accordance with the laws.

These ten experts draw lots so that each of them shall sit at a different table, and each is the official



score keeper and umpire, "controller," at the table for which he happens to be drawn

The remaining thirty players then draw lots from thirty ballots, of which there are three duplicates of the same numbers, 1 to 10. Those who draw the same numbers sit at the same table, the umpire already drawn for that table making the fourth player

In this method of playing, there is no change of position or of tables during the entire course of play. It is usual to play twenty rounds, or eighty deals, although any number divisible by four may be agreed upon according to the time at disposal. Good players will usually finish eighty deals in about three hours when there is no change in the positions of the players

Instead of keeping the score in the usual way, adding or deducting each successive item to or from the former total of the individual score, two separate columns must be provided for each player. In one of these is entered separately and distinctly the amount of any game he wins, and in the other the exact amount of any game he loses, and all these entries are made in a line opposite the number of the deal, which appears in the left-hand margin. As there can be only one entry opposite each number, the umpire can always tell whose deal it is by the number so far played. In addition to the eight columns required for the four players there should be a column at the right for "Remarks," the use of which we shall see presently

In tournaments it is usual to offer prizes for at least two, and generally for three, different achievements.

By adding up the column of points won, and deducting the total points lost, the umpire ascertains the highest point score at his table, and sets it down in a space provided for that purpose at the head of his score-sheet. He then finds the greatest number of games won, after deducting those lost, and puts that down. Sixteen won, after deducting those lost, is a very good score in twenty rounds.

The various score-sheets being handed to the Committee for examination and comparison, the player who has won the greatest number of points, after deducting those he has lost, wins the first prize. The player who wins the greatest number of games, after deducting those lost, wins the first prize for that. Second and even third prizes may be offered for either or both these results. If there is a tie for points, it usually goes to the one having the most games, and if the tie is for games, it goes to the one having the most points; but no one player can win both prizes. If the result is still a tie for any two prizes, the players cut for it, and the winner of the cut takes his choice, the loser of the cut taking the prize that is left.

When the party is large enough, it is usual to offer a special prize or prizes for winning the most difficult game; that is, the game won "without" the greatest number of matadores. Any player winning a solo

“without” six will usually get this prize, or at least tie for it. In case of ties, the more valuable game wins, a spade solo being better than a heart solo, for instance. A spade tournee without 10 is a better game than a heart solo without 6. In case of ties, the players cut for it.

Any game which is played and won “without” four or more, should be noted in the column for “Remarks.” It is no credit to a player to win his game “with” a large number of matadores.

Sometimes a “booby” prize is offered as a consolation to the player who loses the greatest number of points.

This is the form of game usually adopted for the big Skat tournaments and there is generally an additional interest in playing for a nominal stake, such as a quarter of a cent a point.

The objection to the arrangement just described is that there is too much luck in the grouping of the players, because it may happen that one very good player will find himself at a table with three who know little or nothing about the game, which may give the good player an unfair advantage. It is also unsociable, because the players have no opportunity to meet any but the three at their own table. In addition to this, it does not carry out what should be the chief aim of any tournament or congress, to allow each player an opportunity not only to meet but to play

with and against as many and as various grades of players as possible, so as to improve his own game by studying the methods of others

In order to bring about this meeting of each with each as far as possible, there are various methods of moving the players after each round or two, any of which may be adopted

Instead of picking out umpires for the various tables, the tables are simply divided into sections, with as many tables in each section as there are rounds to be played, or some proportion of that number. No section should contain more than ten tables, which will permit of forty deals, because there is not time to play more than forty deals in any form of the game in which the players move

If there are fifteen tables, they may be divided into three sets of five each, and eight deals, or two rounds, played at each table. With small numbers of players it may be better to have only three at each table, so that three deals shall be a round, and the movements may be more numerous

The players may sit anywhere to begin, but in large gatherings it is just as well to issue tickets so ordered that the candidates for play shall fill up the tables one after the other

The score is kept in the usual way, on an ordinary score-sheet, but at the end of each round, or at the end of the number of rounds agreed upon, the scores

are balanced and each player at the table puts down his score on a separate slip, upon which he states the number of points won or lost, and the number of games won or lost, in both cases after deducting the one from the other, so that the points or games shall be net. These slips must be O K'd by some other player at the table, before they are gathered up by the chief scorer's assistant and taken to the scoring table to be entered up on a large sheet prepared for the purpose. Any remarks as to extraordinary games won must be on the slips, and O K'd by another player.

At the end of the round or rounds agreed upon for each table, the players always move in pairs, those sitting opposite each other at the table being considered as the moving pair.

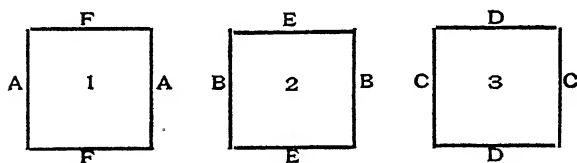
The players sitting N and S at each table do not move, but each and every pair sitting E and W must move to the next table, taking the place of those that leave that table to go to the next. In order to facilitate this movement, the tables should be arranged in rows, as far as possible, and it is convenient to have them all numbered.

By the time the E and W pair return to the table from which they started, the agreed number of deals or rounds will be complete, and the game will be at an end, every E and W pair having visited and played with every N and S pair in their section.

A still better way of arranging the movement of the

players is what is known as, "Up the sides and down the middle." No matter how many tables are in play in a section, the movement is always the same, and if it is explained for three tables it will suffice for any number. The movement is still by pairs, as before; but in this case only one pair sits still during the whole game, and they do so simply as a pivot for the movements of the others.

Let us suppose three tables to be in a section, and the pairs to be seated as follows:



The pivot pair in every case will be those sitting at Table No. 1, in this case A-A. At the end of a round or rounds, those at the sides move up toward Table No. 1, while those in the middle of the row, except the pivot pair, move down toward Table No. 3. This will bring E-E to Table No. 1; D-D to Table No. 2; and will take B-B down to Table No. 3. There will then be only one vacant place for F-F to go to at the table next them, to the place which B-B have just left, and C-C will have to turn round at Table No. 3, getting on the side, ready to begin their movement toward Table No. 1 next time.

The number of rounds to be played being finished, it will be found that if another movement were to take place, it would bring the players' all back to their original positions. It will also be found that each pair has met and played with every other pair, no matter how many tables are in the series, because each must come up to Table No. 1 in regular order and play with A-A, and while they do this, the others meet other pairs.

The following Table will show the number of rounds or deals required for the various numbers of tables, with four players at each table:

<i>Players.</i>	<i>Tables.</i>	<i>Rounds.</i>	<i>Deals.</i>
12	3	5	20
16	4	7	28
20	5	9	36
24	6	11	44
28	7	13	52
32	8	15	60

There are methods by which each individual may meet each other in a different combination each round, but these are too complicated for general use.

## TECHNICAL TERMS

THERE are some expressions which one hears at the Skat table that should be understood even by those who do not care to carry on the conversation of the game in German.

Wenzels are the names for the four jacks when they are trumps. In Nullo they are Buben.

Zahlkarten are the cards that have a counting value, to distinguish them from the 7 8 9, which are Fehlkarten.

Einstecken is to trump in.

Fordern is to attack by leading trumps.

Schneiden is to finesse, playing the king second hand when holding ace and king.

Wimmeln is to fatten tricks. The English word "smear" is sometimes used instead.

A Maurer is one who will bid only on certainties. When a player is found to have held two or three wenzels and aces he is looked upon as a maurer if he has not made a bid.

A Kiebitz is one of those who will not risk their money by playing, but sit and look on, offering endless advice to players who do not want it, and criticising plays by the result and not by principle.



It is sometimes useful to know the German names for the cards. These vary considerably, and in some places they are known by one term, in another place by another. Those that usually go together are here placed in the same line.

J	A	10	K	Q	9	8	7
Wenzel.	Daus.	Zehn.	König.	Ober.	Neun.	Acht.	Sieben.
Bube.	As.	Zehn.	König.	Dame.	Neun.	Acht.	Sieben.

The initials of these names are commonly used in notation, and when a book begins with those in the first row, which are called the German names, it usually preserves it, but if an occasional slip is found, the initials will refer to the French notation, in the second row. Jacks are sometimes called Bauern, Jungen, and Unten.

The suits have a variety of names, some referring to the colours, some to the device. Those that are, or should be, kept together are shown in column:

♣ Trefle.	Braün.	Kreutz.	Eicheln.	Eckern.
♠ Pique.	Grün.	Schüppen.	Laub.	
♥ Cœur.	Roth.	Hertzen.		
♦ Carreau.	Gelb.	Schellen.	Eckstein.	Ruthen.

In notation, an author may use the French terms, and preface the denomination of the card by a suit mark; tr. p. co. car. Most of the German authors, while they use the initials of the colours, Green and Red, for spades and hearts, do not use Brown and Yellow

for the clubs and diamonds, but substitute Eicheln and Schellen; so that their notation for the four suits is: e. g. r. s.

The word "skat" is pronounced with the long "a," like the "a" in father.

**THE END**











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